

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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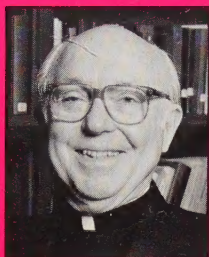
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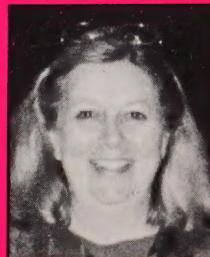
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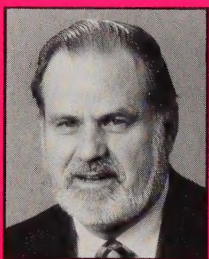




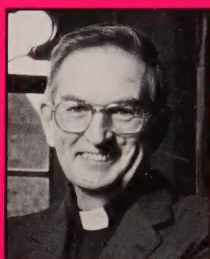
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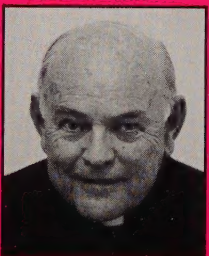
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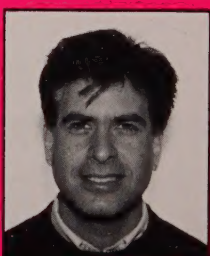
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Manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate to the Executive Editor, Linda Amadeo, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, 5401 South Cornell Avenue, Chicago, IL 60615-5698. Copy should be typewritten double-spaced on  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ -inch white paper, 70 characters per line and 28 lines per page. Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 pages) with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Book reviews, which should not exceed 600 words in length, should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Jon O'Brien, S.J., D.O., c/o HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (for address, see above).

Unaccepted manuscripts will not be returned unless requested and submitted with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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# EDITOR'S PAGE

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## INSTITUTE MOVING TO CHICAGO SOON

**D**uring our third year as students at Saint Ignatius High School in San Francisco, California, we were introduced to the writings of the English author Samuel Johnson, in particular his novel *Rasselas*. In that story, Johnson expresses a view of human nature that I have for some reason never forgotten. He writes, "No one is happy but by the anticipation of change. The change itself is nothing. It is only followed by the desire to change again." Throughout my lifetime, I have met many people whose manner of living has given plenty of support to Johnson's observation. On the other hand, as a psychiatrist, I have encountered at least as many individuals who experience so much anxiety whenever they anticipate a change that they perennially strive to avoid every sort of change while clutching the tranquility that stability affords them.

In my own life, I have often found change to be exciting and most desirable, but in some situations the prospect of change was the last thing in the world I wanted to face. But here we are, at the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development, on the brink of a major change again—one that I'm happy to be able to announce right now to our readers but also a little sad about because of the inevitable personal losses it will entail. I'll try to explain.

In 1996 a good friend of ours, Father Canice Connors, was the director of Saint Luke Institute in Maryland. With vision and generosity, he invited us to move the Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality (CISHS) from Boston to Silver Spring and to establish our educational program as a complement to the psychiatric care that he and his staff provided for clergy and religious. Excited by the opportunity to make the change, I wrote in *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT* (Winter 1996), "We will be able to improve our educational offerings by presenting

them in a setting where the cultural, historical, and religious resources of our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C., will literally be a few miles from our doorstep. . . . The change is one we spent a great deal of time considering and praying about, and some very clear subsequent signs convinced us that the move coincides with God's plans for us."

In view of that careful discernment process, I would hesitate to say that it was a mistake on our part to move from New England to the space we have been renting here in Maryland at Saint Luke's. Indeed, several hundred of our students have said that they found our program here most helpful and rated the living facilities more comfortable than those we were able to provide when we were in Boston. But what we have learned during our past three years of sharing the same roof with a psychiatric hospital is that, for us, such a location is at best a mixed blessing. On the positive side, most of our students have reported growth in their compassion for emotionally ill patients, appreciation of the hospital's liturgies and food services, and gratitude for the opportunity to enjoy the historical and cultural riches of nearby Washington, D.C.. However, we have gradually come to realize, as a result of their candid feedback, that too many who came to study with us were uncomfortable being in such close proximity to psychiatric patients, particularly those suffering from such behavioral disorders as sexual addiction and pedophilia. Some have told us that they would not have come into our program here if they had been aware of our physical closeness to Saint Luke Institute. A significant number have stated that as profitable as the CISHS program has been for them, they will be reluctant to recommend it to others until we situate it in an academic rather than a psychiatric-hospital setting. Similarly, many potential students have informed us that they will not come to study with us until we find a location outside a climate of mental illness.

Another factor that has presented a problem for us is an obvious one: It has troubled several of our stu-



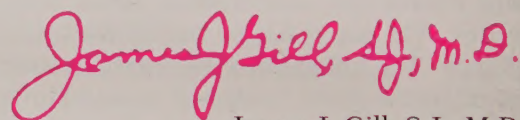
dents who are members of religious congregations to come into the Saint Luke chapel or dining room and suddenly encounter there a priest or religious brother or sister they never expected to find being treated in a psychiatric hospital. Needless to say, such unanticipated contacts can be just as discomforting—or even more so—for the patient. So, taking all these issues into serious consideration, we have spent months searching for the right location for our Institute, and we have finally, happily found one.

The Catholic Theological Union (CTU) at Chicago, Illinois, has invited us to relocate there, and we are about to do so. CTU is collectively owned and sponsored by twenty-four religious orders and dedicated to preparing religious and lay women and men for roles of leadership in the church. Moving there will situate us in the midst of eleven neighboring theological schools—one of the largest concentrations of theological resources in the world. Our new home will be in the Hyde Park section of Chicago, an exciting university neighborhood just minutes away from the center of one of America's most dynamic and beautiful cities.

Among CTU's other recently acquired programs are the Hesburgh Center for Continuing Formation in Ministry (formerly at Notre Dame University), the Institute of Religious Formation (originally at Saint Louis University), and the Center for the Study of Religious Life. In their inspiring company, we at CISHS

will continue to offer our students the same unique academic program, superb faculty and library, and fine living accommodations we have maintained in the past. We are confident that in our new environment, surrounded by five hundred undergraduate and graduate students at the nation's largest Catholic school of theology and ministry, we will avoid the negative features associated with the location we are leaving in Maryland.

We intend to move during the last week of July and will be ready to welcome a new group of students at CTU on the weekend of August 4-6. For now, we are grateful to Father Steve Rossetti, the current president of Saint Luke Institute, for the hospitality he and his colleagues have afforded. We are experiencing these days, as Samuel Johnson would expect, the true happiness that results when an exciting and God-given change is in the air. The future we foresee for CISHS and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT magazine is stirring up far more enthusiasm than anxiety in our hearts, and we hope that all our readers, former students, and benefactors will share deeply in our current optimism and joy.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.  
Editor-in-Chief

### *Announcement*

**The Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality  
and  
the publishing offices of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
are moving to The Catholic Theological Union  
in Chicago, Illinois.**

**Our new address, beginning August 1, 2000, will be  
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*For more information, please see the back cover of this issue.*



# Integrated Religious Leadership

*Helen Maher Garvey, B.V.M.*

**H**urrying to a meeting of congregational leaders, a provincial stops to consult with a committee at the motherhouse about a swatch of carpet for the newly renovated chapel. While she is discussing the relative merits of solid colors or patterns, red or blue, carpet or wood, vague feelings of guilt assail her. What is she doing here? Why is she spending her energy on this trivia? How can she lift her sights to vision?

In preparation for the leadership meeting, this administrator has read articles on organizational development. Well able to distinguish between administration and leadership, she knows that management is not vision. She recognizes her responsibility to be knowledgeable about the future of religious life, to open herself and others to new possibilities, to collaborate, to delegate, to balance her life, to travel the information superhighway, to understand the fruit of the chaos of this new time. Still, this leader enjoys the casual conversation with elderly residents and middle-aged administrators. She appreciates the give-and-take, the in-jokes, the discussion about which residents will like everything and which residents will oppose any color, any pattern, any provincial. Yet the feelings of guilt persist: this is only administration.

Have articles on leadership unconsciously fostered a dichotomy between administration and leadership?

Have they created a discouraging dualism? Have they (perish the thought) fostered a hierarchy between leadership and administration? Have they created distorted pictures of the wise leader who delegates in order to pursue vision and the foolish leader who addresses the boring tasks of administration?

Every leader bears the sacred responsibility of vision—and the equally sacred responsibility of administration. (If you do not think administration is a sacred responsibility, delay the delivery of a car to a sister in Topeka, or neglect the roof on the motherhouse, or forget a Jubilee card.) They are not separate. They are essentially related. They cry for integration. Only a leader who has a fundamental grasp of the finances of the congregation can speak effectively about a vision of allocating resources for ministry with the poor. Only a leader who has held the hand of a dying person faced with end-of-life decisions can dialogue credibly about advanced directives.

The administrator who participates intelligently in a decision about the chapel carpet is the leader who understands the reality of liturgical renewal—the essential place of the assembly as the Body of Christ, the centrality of word and sacrament, the pain of women's place in the Eucharist. The administrator who talks reliably with formation personnel is the



leader who is familiar with such documents as *The Proceedings for the Synod on Religious Life*, *The Threads of the Loom* (a study of women religious and ministry), and *The Future of Religious Life in the United States* (FORUS). The administrator who drinks coffee with the maintenance staff is the leader who appreciates the Vatican II documents reaffirming the rights and responsibilities of all the baptized.

Recently, I mourned the death of a dear friend—a nun who created and managed the computer system for a large religious organization and who labored at her position until ten days before her death. Visiting her burial plot the day after the funeral, I noticed one small card sticking up through the soil. Detached from the floral piece, it read, “With love from Al, Wayne, and Denis.” Al, Wayne, and Denis were the maintenance crew—the guys who make it all work. The message spoke to me of love. On further reflection, it speaks to me of the integration of administration and vision into the substance of leadership.

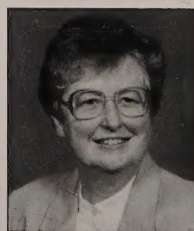
It is understandable that experts focus on the vision aspect of leadership rather than the administrative element. Most religious know how to administer. They have managed budgets, debated faculty issues, organized classes, or developed role descriptions. They have not regularly practiced the discipline of imagination. It is hard to imagine—to imagine collaboratively, to imagine in the face of resistance or entrenched attitudes. So writers and consultants correctly urge us toward vision because they know we will do the administration. We have to do the administration. No one, however, will perform an audit on vision—so we tend to neglect the ongoing study and thought so essential to vision.

Theoretically, administration focuses on today—on evaluation of data, scheduling, and decision making—whereas vision concentrates on the future, on study and imagination. Realistically, the leader is one person integrating all these activities and, at the heart of it all, building relationships and making room for the unexpected. With all her daily practicality, the administrator knows that, as Fyodor Dostoyevsky

wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*, “if everything were rational, nothing would happen.” Correspondingly, the person of vision recognizes that the imagination is grounded in today’s experience. The leader, as both administrator and person of vision, understands intuitively that building the reign of God involves touching both realities—the present practicality and the future imagination—at the same time.

In their efforts to promote leadership as vision, however, consultants may forget the truth of integration. They may overlook the all-embracing vision of Jesus—a vision rooted in seeds and fish and little children. Integration suggests that in their work of administration, leaders relate the great ideas of our time to the relentless labor of our days—connecting budgets to world hunger, renovation to ecological justice, health care for community members to health legislation for the poor.

The challenge is to administer without micro-managing, to dream without spinning a mirage, to discipline the mind for significant periods of sustained study, to integrate the fine science of administration with the subtle art of visioning. The challenge is to be fully attentive to the daily work while remembering that “deep within, in the whispers of the heart, is the surging call of the eternal Christ hidden within us all. By an inner isthmus we are connected with the mainland of eternal love” (Thomas Kelly, *Quaker Spirituality*). The challenge is to be an integrated leader—to create a dazzling computer system while evoking the love of Al, Wayne, and Denis.



Sister Helen Maher Garvey, B.V.M., past president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, is director of pastoral service for mission in the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky.



# Leadership, Change, and Resistance

*Gerald A. Arbuckle, S.M., Ph.D.*

*"Survey the path for your feet, and let all your ways be sure." (Prov. 4: 26)*

**A**t times, leaders find that resistance to necessary change by groups and individuals is difficult to understand and to handle. Resistance to change—for example, in the pastoral ministry—has many causes. People may not understand the reasoning behind a proposed change, or they may disagree with its purpose, or they may lack sufficient information and motivation.

Resistance can be overt or covert, immediate or deferred, conscious or unconscious. Overt resistance—for example, when people react vocally or by go-slow processes or strikes—is easier to manage than covert opposition because the leader has something tangible to react to. But when opposition is more subtle—as evidenced in group or individual lowering of morale, absenteeism, gossip, and scapegoating—it is far more difficult to name and address it. Equally disturbing are people who favor a change, perhaps even involve themselves in its initial planning, but then either cease to promote it or obstruct those who wish to implement it. Meanwhile, creative people who are committed to pursue the mission of the group, when confronted with resistance, become increasingly frustrated and angry. They find that energy and time, which should be given actively to

pursuing the mission, are needlessly dissipated on efforts to cope with opposition.

This article concentrates on the nature of resistance from a cultural perspective and suggests ways to overcome it, with particular reference to an axiom that I call "the new belongs elsewhere" or "the bypass process." The people-related topic of culture has been shown to be the major source of resistance to radical change among a wide variety of American and European organizations.

## **RESISTANCE: CULTURAL ROOTS**

One way of describing culture is "that which resists change." Why is this so? Sociologist Peter Berger calls culture *nomos* (felt order, or the predictable) because culture protects us from what we most fear—namely, the awesome insecurities of *anomy* (chaos, or breakdown of felt order). *Nomos*, Berger writes in *The Sacred Canopy*, is "an area of meaning carved out of a vast mass of meaninglessness, a small clearing of lucidity in a formless, dark, almost ominous jungle." Culture, in this sense, is a human creation that protects us from the fear-evoking dark abyss of disorder and chaos into which we might otherwise fall. It is a personal and group defense against the anxiety that change generates. There is little wonder, then, that cultures and the people who belong to them oppose change.



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## When cultural predictability is threatened or disintegrates, people can experience the darkness of meaninglessness, a crushing taste of chaos

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When cultural predictability is threatened or disintegrates, people can experience the darkness of meaninglessness, a crushing taste of chaos. The poet Dante Alighieri describes the chaos as “a forest dark . . . So bitter is it, death is little more.” Change—even, at times, the faintest whisper of it—substitutes ambiguity and uncertainty for the known. We are confronted with the abyss of the unknown or “a forest dark” often in life, when the ordinary supports of cultural security no longer function—for example, upon the death of a friend, or during midlife crisis. The psalmist, suffering a mortal illness, vividly describes his sense of being lost: he is “deprived” of his “friends and companions and all [he] know[s] is the dark” (Ps. 88). No one, even his dearest friends, can comfort him in his sense of inner lostness.

Changes in a parish or in the workplace culture can evoke a similar reaction of fear. People invest considerable physical, intellectual, emotional, and psychological energy into constructing a culture that defines and supports their occupational roles with a comforting sense of security. When change is proposed or imposed, these roles and sense of personal worth are declared unimportant. Old psychological contracts are broken, loyalties and informal friendship networks are undermined, and a sense of purpose and direction is lost. Disturbing questions arise. Will I continue to be employed, or can I find other work? What unknown skills will I need for a new task? Will I lose my friends and have to make new ones? In a culture in which identity is so connected with one's work, these fears

are well-founded. Not surprisingly, cultural changes and the consequent chaos can catalyze dysfunctional behavior—for example, jealousy, envy, outbursts of anger, despair, excessive drinking, bullying, blaming, or scapegoating people for causing change.

In her book *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, anthropologist Mary Douglas approaches the meaning of culture and resistance to change by focusing on a people's understanding of “purity” and “pollution.” Every human society and organization subscribes, most often unconsciously, to rules of purity and pollution in some form or another. A culture is a purity system—that is, it tells people what is pure or clean, and therefore morally good, and what is impure, unclean, or evil, and therefore dangerous or polluting. What is impure is “material that is not in the right place.” It is considered dirty, and people do not feel right until things are put where they should belong. Pollution, as opposed to purity, interferes with the acceptable equilibrium, destroys or confuses desirable boundaries, and evokes destructive forces or conditions. The purity system of a culture can affect every aspect of a people's way of life: places, statuses and roles of people, appreciation of time and food. What is not within the set categories of cleanliness is outside the boundaries of decency and must be avoided or destroyed.

In the time of Christ, for example, touching lepers or eating with tax collectors and sinners made one “polluted” because these people were considered unclean. They were kept at a safe distance, well away from the boundaries of what was considered to be a decent or clean society. If contact occurred, rituals of purification were obligatory. In today's cultures, there are still rules and regulations about what is clean and unclean. In Japan, wearing shoes within the house is considered dirty; in Western countries, this is not the case, but placing used shoes on the table is regarded as dirty. “Spring cleaning” of a house or office illustrates our sense of relief when things are returned to their “correct” place. There is little wonder that people resist changes that would alter their traditional rules and feelings about what is pure and what is polluting.

Every culture has a built-in resistance to change simply because people feel deeply about what is regarded as socially decent or right. To break the boundaries of purity is to risk evoking unknown powers of evil. Whoever dares to question the accepted rules of purity in a culture is perceived to endanger the personal and cultural identity of others. “Ethnic cleansing” is an example of this dynamic being taken to an extreme—a reality so tragically experienced in Kosovo and East Timor in recent times. When Martin



Luther King was alive, many middle-class white Americans wanted to marginalize him because he was interfering with the boundaries of the “pure” society. Their feelings about where blacks and whites belonged in American society were being challenged, and they did not like it.

## RESISTING INNOVATORS

Innovative people—scientists, poets, philosophers, artists, change agents, refounders of cultures or organizations—have one thing in common: they venture into the unknown, beyond the boundaries of perceived purity and into chaos, in search of new meanings or new ways of doing things. We are ambivalent toward these people. On one hand, we can appreciate them for offering us, through their initiatives and inventions, better ways of doing things. On the other hand, especially until we have become used to the interesting things they provide to us, we fear them simply because they dare to journey into the unknown, a world of disorder and impurity, the chaos of nonmeaning. Just as we can react with feeling to physical dirt, so we react to people and ideas that dare to invade our carefully structured world of experienced meaning. Recall the axiom: What is not in its place, within boundaries set by the group, is dirty and in danger of polluting all that we hold dear.

Berger expresses our fear of the innovator in this way: “the individual who strays seriously from the socially defined programs can be considered not only a fool or a knave but a madman.” Pejorative words like *dissenters*, *deviants*, *rebels*, *revolutionaries*, *traitors to tradition*, *cultural heretics*, and *big-heads* are commonly used to describe creative people. The purpose is to disempower them by pushing them to the margins of society, where they are unable to pollute society with their dangerous ideas and ways. Biblical examples of marginalizing the prophets as innovators are many. King Ahab condemned Elijah as “you troubler of Israel” (1 Kings 18:17) because Elijah had castigated the king for maintaining his oppression of the poor and had called for an alternative system in favor of the marginalized. The prophet Amos, facing banishment for the same reason (Amos 7:10–17), was labeled a “conspirator.” Jeremiah was branded with the word “treason” (Jer. 38:4) for daring to challenge the unjust status quo, and Jesus was called “blasphemous” (Mark 2:7) for the same reason.

Anthropologically, scapegoating or witch-hunting crazes in modern or traditional cultures—including that of the church itself—flourish in times of significant cultural upheaval. Such crazes have several functions: to explain what cannot be understood, to control the uncontrollable, to account for the problem of

evil personally and in society, and to atone for the “sin” of people who dare to question society’s purity rules or order. People who identify a scapegoat benefit psychologically—at least in the short term. A cause is found, and life’s difficulties become comprehensible. Devaluation of a scapegoat confers a sense of superiority and a feeling of control amid chaos.

Innovators are ready targets for scapegoating. These “corrupting” agents are to be named, ridiculed, gossiped about, and eliminated. Truth and objectivity lose out. As long as the group is protected from the source of contamination, nothing else matters, no matter what moral or physical violence the innocent experience. The preservation or restoration of the cultural status quo must be achieved at all costs. Commonly, innovators lack power to defend themselves, and this increases their vulnerability to becoming scapegoats. After a scapegoating craze, people often feel a sense of euphoria—but it will not last, because the reality of chaos cannot long be ignored. Other victims are then chosen to satisfy the anxieties and rage of the persecuting group.

In the case of Christ, the elimination and the act of atonement were physically violent, but scapegoating does not have to involve physical harm to be effective. Violence can be deflected onto a person’s or group’s property. For example, in an organization that was in a state of disintegration, a would-be innovator’s office was broken into at night by colleagues, and his personal effects were scattered to other parts of the building. The victim’s questions about the colleagues’ failure to collaborate with one another for the sake of a common mission had been too disturbing; they had to do something to “eliminate” him from their consciousness. The violence done to the victim’s private papers and research files symbolized the destruction of his organizational identity and his psychological expulsion from the community.

Given this dynamic of resistance, innovators often complain of the weariness they experience when they must defend their ideas and creative actions to an audience that refuses to listen. “It is not that we want people to agree with us,” said one. “What we desire most is for people to give us a hearing. Then we can devise new ways to present our ideas because people are open to listen to us. It is exhausting to have to battle repeatedly to explain what we are trying to do, knowing that no one wants to listen.”

## LEADERS AND RESISTANCE

The primary task of officially appointed leaders is to safeguard an organization’s future. For example, the chief executive officer of a hospital must ensure that the institution remains financially viable and



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fulfills its mission. A bishop must foster a diocesan community of worship and justice. To fulfill this mission, a leader has four functions: a *conserving* function (i.e., to identify the purpose of a group's reason for being and to call people to be accountable to it), a *management* function (i.e., to enforce a framework of order that allows people to get on with their work), an *empowering* role (i.e., to encourage people to use their talents for the sake of the common good), and a *proactive* role (i.e., to encourage people to respond not just to the symptoms of a problem but also to its roots). This latter function is termed the refounding, or transforming, role of leadership.

It is difficult for a leader, particularly when confronted by opposition, to achieve a correct balance in exercising these four functions. The proactive role of leadership is the most difficult because it means challenging people and their culture to move forward into an uncertain future, beyond traditional and comforting boundaries. Leaders are tempted to escape this daunting challenge in various ways. They may concentrate on the empowering role to the detriment of the other functions, especially the proactive. Or the managerial role may become an end in itself. An overemphasis on empowering, conserving, and management turns individuals and groups inward, away from the fear-evoking hazards of the world around us. That will eventually mean death to the group.

Leaders also face risks arising from the often unconscious reactions of groups or individuals who are resisting change. Any change can evoke fantasies in individuals and groups, and the leader can col-

lude with them, thus losing objectivity. For example, the group may view the leader as their oppressor, and the leader can unwittingly act out the group's fantasy by becoming a bully. On the other hand, the leader may seek to save the group from the disruptive consequences of change, identifying with the people's fantasy that innovators are evil destroyers of the peace. Either way, leaders lose touch with reality and behaviorally mirror the dysfunctionality of the group.

Some cultures are more resistant to change than others; the degree of resistance will depend on what model of culture is operative in the group. Charles Handy, author of *Understanding Organizations*, identifies four models of organizational culture: power, role, person, and mission. In *power* cultures—for example, religious congregations prior to Vatican II—creativity is permissible only at the top, and even that is limited by the rigorous constraints of tradition. The *role* culture is a bureaucracy that by definition aims to maintain the status quo and discourage innovation. In the *person* culture, the individual is the central figure, and all is directed to his or her welfare, no matter what the cost to the common good. A culture of this type, in which creativity exists primarily for the individual, will resist change that threatens to undermine individualism and favors the common good. Only where *mission* cultures exist is there an atmosphere conducive to the emergence of creativity. In this culture type, the primary aim for the group is to respond to needs beyond itself through flexible and innovative means. People collaborate for that purpose, sharing talents, fostering creative dissent, and encouraging one another in pursuit of a common mission. The primary task is the realization of the group's vision, not the satisfaction of the participants' needs. Leadership in this culture is to be proactive, and people will resist it when it fails in this task.

The majority of cultures belong to the first three types and are based on mythologies of leadership and group control that discourage the radical creativity necessary for refounding organizations in a rapidly changing world. A mission culture will quickly revert to one of the other three types unless its members take evasive action and are committed to ongoing personal and group transformation. Remember: human beings yearn for predictability and fear the unknown. A mission culture can be described as journey during which a group is constantly exploring an unknown world.

### OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

Methods of overcoming or avoiding debilitating opposition range along a continuum, from the more



democratic involvement that encourages people to participate in shaping a change, through modeling the change (demonstrating through example), through persuasion (winning people over to advantages of the change), through negotiation (reviewing ways in which one can meet the concerns of those resisting the change in order to reach a compromise), to using one's position of authority to impose the change from above.

Contemporary and popular economic rationalism assumes that the latter leadership option is always the right one. It expresses itself in an authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal way, in contrast to transforming leadership, which encourages staff consultation and participative decision making (perceived, along with persuasion and negotiation, as signs of weakness). Decisions are made at the top and passed down, with little or no staff participation. Organizations with this coercive model of leadership are ill-equipped to overcome resistance to change because it will frequently express itself in covert ways, which makes it particularly difficult to manage.

The normal style of decision making should be participative; people will understand that there are times when this is not possible. The more people are involved in what is happening, the less their anxiety and resistance. Jesus chose a transforming form of leadership and refused to adopt the authoritarian style of the leaders of the surrounding cultures. "A servant is not greater than his master" (John 15:20).

Transformative leaders recognize that publicly approved grieving is a critical way to help people and organizational cultures let go of resistance to change and be open to the new. When cultural and individual grief cannot be named in public, their suppressed tensions will finally cause more profound disturbance and resistance than the social conflicts that develop to assuage them (see Arbuckle, "Organizations Must Ritually Grieve," *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*, Spring 1991).

## **BYPASSING RESISTANCE**

Transformative leaders do not waste time and energy, especially in the early stages of organizational change, on trying to win over people who significantly resist change. Their primary concern, in order to safeguard the integrity of the mission, is to identify and support innovators. They know that organizations survive and grow only if innovative people have the space and safety to think and act. However, to be truly innovative, people need certain qualities. They need to have above-average gifts of imagination, intuition, creativity, courage, and hope; they need to be dreamers who do, contemplatives who act. They

are not individualists, because they recognize that authentic change must be collaborative. In brief, they need to be able to relive in depth the founding experience of the group and, in a collaborative way, take innovative quantum leaps into the present world. Passionately committed to the founding vision, they will not lightly be dissuaded from action.

They are not revolutionaries but rebels. Revolutionaries break completely with the past; rebels see the experience of the past as critical for the future. As Rollo May observes in *Power and Innocence*, revolutionaries tend to gather power around themselves; rebels seek power not as an end but as a means to involve others collaboratively in change. Rebels recognize that development requires inner conversion to the vision on the part of all involved, including themselves. Revolutionaries, on the other hand, tend to overlook the inner need for conversion and place the emphasis on structural change alone.

In order to adequately support innovators, transformative leaders may need to implement the axiom "the new belongs elsewhere." That is, when an existing culture is resistant to change, the leader will bypass it by creating a new culture. This will allow innovative people to have the space to act without undue interference from people resisting change. Change agents require simple and clear lines of accountability with the leadership of an organization—that is, systems of communication uncluttered by traditional cultural attitudes and structures that impose on innovators unnecessary restrictions, supervision, and wearying defense of their creative actions. Transformative leaders may need to invoke their rarely used coercive authority to put and maintain the axiom in place.

This does not mean that creative people are to be shielded from all conflict; indeed, creativity and adaptation are born of tension, passion, and conflict. It is a question of protecting creative people from unproductive and deenergizing conflict—that is, conflict that simply does not serve the mission.

## **CASE STUDIES**

**Biblical Example.** Jesus called his followers to adopt the axiom "the new belongs elsewhere" in their pastoral ministry. Using colorful imagery, he warned of the danger of being depowered by the forces of the status quo. It is the mission that has priority: "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth onto an old cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost" (Matt. 9:16–17). Then Jesus enunciated the pastoral axiom: "No, they put



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## Any leader must be concerned with improving the quality of activity and morale if the organization is to survive and grow

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new wine into fresh skins and both are preserved" (Matt. 9:17). Recall also the instruction of Jesus to the apostles: "And if anyone does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, as you walk out of the house or town shake the dust from your feet" (Matt. 10:14). When people are not interested in creative change for the sake of the mission, and particularly if they seek to block it, then Jesus' admonition is to be followed: creative energies must be unequivocally directed elsewhere. Go wherever there is potential for creative life, not death: "Leave the dead to bury their dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60).

**Socioeconomic Change.** In 1953 Jesuit Father Marion Ganey was invited by the British government to establish credit unions in the Fiji Islands. A credit union is a group of people, united by a common bond, who save money together and make loans to each other at low interest. Structures must allow officials of credit unions to be accountable frequently and directly to the people who own them. He accepted on the condition that the colonial government pass legislation that would permit credit unions to be legally independent of existing organizations, particularly the Department of Cooperatives. Cooperatives, contrary to their founding democratic philosophy, were controlled at the time by a paternalistic, centralized, and hierarchical government administration. The people had come to feel that the government owned the cooperatives, not themselves. There is little wonder, therefore, that cooperatives failed. Father Ganey was granted his request, and credit unions developed successfully, according to the axiom: the new (i.e., credit unions legally protected to allow their mission model of organization to develop)

belongs elsewhere (i.e., away from the destructive forces of the authoritarian culture of cooperatives).

**A Wise Bishop.** A bishop decided to foster Basic Christian Communities in a socioeconomically poor part of his diocese. The people had come to feel alienated from the traditional middle-class parish structures in the area. He appointed two priests and two lay people to establish the program with the following guidelines: the priests would not live in the long-established rectory, and they were to be directly responsible to him, not to any other official or group in the diocese. "The people," he said, "needed to understand that a new way of being church was integral to the pastoral approach." Though he explained to the surrounding pastors the thinking behind the experiment, the latter tried at times to interfere with the project—but each time, team members referred them to the bishop, refusing to be involved in any deenergizing arguments.

The project succeeded for several reasons. First, the people were freed from a traditional parish structure that they felt had oppressed them. Second, the evangelizers were able to give themselves fully to the task without loss of valuable energy; the lines of accountability were determined by the needs of the mission. The new (i.e., the pastoral program) belonged elsewhere (i.e., the structures freed the people and the evangelizers from what was pastorally inappropriate).

**A New Mission Area.** A province of a religious congregation sought permission to establish a new mission in a Third World country. The congregation's general leadership team refused permission, proposing instead that it sponsor an internationally staffed mission in the same country, directly accountable to itself. People were invited to join a team according to set criteria, and the mission was to be based on contemporary missiological principles. The mission was established and has flourished.

The leadership team acted according to the axiom. First, it was recognized that the structures of the province had been formed according to pre-Vatican II missiological principles; it would be very difficult for the province to change its thinking on those principles. Second, missionaries who come from the same nation and provincial culture are apt to transfer that culture uncritically to the new community. It is better to begin anew by shaping a new culture of evangelization based on sound missiological principles.

**New Communities.** A provincial leadership team faced the challenge of finding communities suitable for their small number of newly professed members.



The latter had been trained to live in an intentional faith community focused on mission. Most religious in the province, however, had been unable to adjust to this type of living and were more comfortable with the pre-Vatican II institutional style of living, praying, and ministering. In fact, many were actively opposed to the establishment of intentional communities. The leadership decided to form intentional communities precisely for the newly professed and for those older religious willing and able to adopt this form of living. The leadership accurately assessed the situation. Religious have a right to intentional faith communities for the sake of the mission, and they need the structural space to develop them.

### LEADERS MUST ACCOMMODATE CHANGE

Ultimately, the issue of change is the most important contemporary challenge facing leaders of any organization, whether business, church, school, or religious community. Any leader must be concerned with improving the quality of activity and morale if the organization is to survive and grow. This will involve reducing the conflict, hostility, and inertia that block necessary innovation. Though there are no easy solutions for reducing or removing resistance to change, one thing is certain: the need to appreciate that culture has, within itself, deeply rooted, built-in barriers to change. Culture does provide us with a much-needed sense of order; at the same time, how-

ever, our need for predictability can become a barrier to change. Even rumors of change can cause, in both individuals and cultures, profound anxieties about the unknown. Consequently, obstructive barriers emerge, no matter how logically and persuasively the plans for change are presented. At times leaders need to bypass existing organizational structures or cultures in order allow innovators to act without undue interference and cultural constraints.

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# Assessing Seminary Candidates

*Gerald D. Coleman, S.S., and Roger L. Freed, M.D.*

**A**s a seminary rector and a faculty psychiatrist, we (the authors of this article) join our voices and judgment with many others who have addressed the concerns surrounding the need to adequately evaluate candidates for diocesan and religious formation programs. We affirm that every effort at formation involves human beings and therefore includes an element of personalization. All formation must promote an ever deeper consciousness of one's own identity; an ever more loving openness to others; a sense of responsibility, which calls a candidate to undertake the service or ministry in which he can give of himself; and an intimate experience of the living presence of the Trinity, which is proper to every individual. Seminary formation is clearly a work of grace, an endeavor of the Holy Spirit who works with and through the personal and indispensable cooperation of the candidate and those who are responsible for his formation.

In *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Pope John Paul II suggests that prior to admission to any formation program, a procedure of screening is necessary—a process that aims at discerning in the candidate a certain level of human maturity and freedom. This exhortation describes this assessment in three levels: formal psychological testing; in-depth interview(s) based on behavioral patterns; and a studied review of the

candidate's personal history. The latter has been found to be the single most reliable means of assessing human maturity, especially as it takes into account the different expressions of human maturity found in diverse cultural backgrounds.

In light of this directive, our concern in this article is to articulate a clear methodology for such an assessment. First and foremost, we believe that every candidate applying to a formation program must demonstrate two overarching capacities: functional ability and availability for formation and, ultimately, for priestly life. These two critical, interrelating capacities are explained in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*:

The priest should be able to know the depths of the human heart, to perceive difficulties and problems, to make meeting and dialogue easy, to create trust and cooperation, to express serene and objective judgments. Future priests should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry. These qualities are needed for them to be balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their own word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behavior. . . . In this con-



text affective maturity, which is the result of an education in true and responsible love, is a significant and decisive factor in the formation of candidates for the priesthood.

It is fundamentally the work and expertise of seminary/formation faculties to assess the candidate's aptitude for priestly ministry, reflected in his intellectual abilities, his capability to adequately and accurately communicate the Catholic tradition, his responsiveness to authentic pastoral needs, and his commitment to an integrated and holistic spiritual life. While the seminary faculty also sustains a responsibility to discern a candidate's availability for ordained ministry in the church, this discernment is greatly dependent on the candidate's inner strengths to truly grasp what is needed and what is critical for priestly ministry: his availability for authentic relationships, his openness to deepen his levels of maturity, his availability for obedience, and his commitment to a life of integrity. We believe that a candidate might well possess the ability to do priestly work but lack the necessary availability to do this work with human wholeness and authentic integrity. This basic availability must be carefully weighed during the psychological evaluations of a candidate for possible entrance into a seminary or formation program.

A good amount of attention has already been given to the "new moment" in today's society and its multicultural reality, which make the psychological assessment not only critical but quite complex. In their 1996 *Pastoral Psychology* article "Personality Characteristics of Successful Applicants to the Priesthood," Thomas G. Plante and colleagues cautiously comment that

recently, a great deal of media attention has focused on sexual abuse perpetrated by Roman Catholic priests as well as neoconservative and often unpopular positions of the Catholic church (e.g., celibacy, ordination of women, homosexuality, contraception use, and abortion). Frequent front-page news articles, national magazine cover stories, and feature-length films about these issues are common. Catholic priests, as well as the Catholic church in general, have been under tremendous scrutiny. This scrutiny has also included questions concerning the character, personality, and general psychological health of priests and applicants to the priesthood. Some have suggested that priests and applicants to the priesthood often experience serious personality and psychological dysfunction.

In her most recent book, *Seminaries, Theologates, and the Future of Church Ministry*, Sister Katarina Schuth asks the question, "Who will be our future priests?" Her study of priests-to-be (*Trust*, vol. 10, 1999) illustrates well some of the complexity already

referenced. "In assessing the overall picture presented by seminarians today as compared with those of ten years ago," she writes, "the most striking change is the increase in racial and ethnic diversity. . . . All this presages an alteration in the face of the Catholic priesthood in the United States over the next two decades."

In analyzing the "religious backgrounds" of these seminarians, Schuth's study categorizes four types: those deeply rooted in their faith; those recently converted; those with a minimal connection to the church; and those who have a rigid understanding of their faith. Schuth points out that it is important to bear in mind that while a seminarian may substantially belong to one particular group, he may exhibit behavior(s) associated with the others. The rigid group presents the most challenges that are not rooted solely in upbringing and background. Most of these seminarians came of age after Vatican II concluded and have no lived memory of the church before 1970. Like their peers, they have been greatly affected by American cultural forms—especially the media, technology, and communications. Schuth comments that "after having sometimes been quite immersed in this culture, their response now is to withdraw and condemn the world as they see it. Although the secular culture touches other seminarians and many other students as well, not all of them respond by withdrawing, which suggests that other character traits also lead to withdrawal."

What are these other traits? Schuth reports that seminary administrators and faculty describe this fourth type of student "quite vividly." External signs include an unhappy appearance, downcast eyes, tight body, and no sense of humor. These "types" generally express dissatisfaction with the seminary and criticize it for lacking sufficient devotion or orthodoxy. They judge any new insight as a threat and thus avoid critical thinking. Schuth concludes, "At their worst, these students exhibit signs of paranoia, suspicion, and constant vigilance in monitoring each other's motivation. Trust is absent." Schuth's study indicates that these kinds of seminarians represent the "extreme type" but nonetheless have a greater impact than their limited numerical presence might suggest.

In light of this complex racial, ethnic, and neoconservative picture of today's seminarians, it is our conviction that candidates for the priesthood and religious life must be available by demonstrating several human qualities. They should be developmentally and psychologically healthy, have experienced some depth of life, be inspired to consider ordained ministry as a true service to the church, and thus be of genuine benefit to those who experience their ministry. Contrary to this authentic human and spiritual availability,



we have encountered some candidates and seminarians with latent disorders that later emerged in problematic behaviors or noncontributory isolation. We believe that a better means of validly evaluating candidates can be developed to ensure an improved ministerial contribution, as well as a more meaningful religious vocation for the individual.

We desire to use our combined experience of many years working in the seminary context to offer a viable method of evaluating candidates, with an emphasis on an integration of approaches: a set of guidelines for a structured interview, a series of psychometric assessments, and a format for integrating the two. We also believe that an individualized effort must be made to strengthen the psychologically healthy seminarian to assist him, during his time of formation, in psychological growth and development in needed areas in order to assist him to proceed toward effective ordained ministry in the church. In this regard, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* is instructive:

Human maturity, and in particular affective maturity, requires a clear and strong "training in freedom," which expresses itself in convinced and heartfelt obedience to the "truth" of one's own being, to the "meaning" of one's own existence, that is to the "sincere gift of self" as the way and fundamental content of the authentic realization of self. . . . On this educational journey toward a mature, responsible freedom, the community life of the seminary can provide help.

In this regard, every seminary and formation program should make available to seminarians competent psychologists or psychiatrists whose aim is to work with the presumably healthy seminarian in order to strengthen a viable maturity that already exists. The responsibility of the seminary psychologist or psychiatrist is thus not to provide long-term therapy for a seminarian but to be a mentor who assists the seminarian to grow more fully in human maturity and spirituality. The seminary therapist should thus be seen by the seminary and the student not as a threat but as a formation companion.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Seminaries and houses of formation give significant weight during the admissions process to the report of the psychological profile and assessment by a candidate's sponsoring diocese or religious community. There will always be variations in the way the clinical interview and psychometric assessments are conducted; thus, it is necessary to bring some uniformity to the kinds of information these reports provide.

Customarily, such psychological profiles are concerned with ruling out significant psychopathol-

ogy, personality disorders, crippling developmental deficits, and neurotic tendencies; any psychological qualities antithetical to healthy, normal personal relationships; or attitudes that might provide avoidant reactions to others. While this level of profile is obviously important, admission personnel also need to receive the kind of psychological information that also focuses on the particular and uniquely defining characteristics and personality of an applicant. We therefore believe that the following dimensions should be addressed by the designated psychologist when evaluating a candidate's readiness and availability for priestly formation.

### Biological and Constitutional Factors

- Medical history and health status
- Somatotype; physical appearance
- View of wellness and ability to actualize
- History of alcoholism or mental disorders in the family
- Drug or medication history

### Social Determinants and Current Life Situation

- Family background and relations
- Educational and work background
- Supportive affiliations and systems

### Identity and Self-Concept

- How does the applicant view himself, and how is he viewed by others?
- What is his level of self-esteem, and on what is it based?
- What are his aspirations personally, socially, vocationally?
- What is his psychological freedom to make a realistic and stable vocational choice?
- How to characterize his ego-strength?
- How to rate his ability to maintain self-esteem while working for the common good under obedience?

### Personality Factors

#### Style

- Capacity for work under tension
- Ability to deal with stress, pressure, and multiple responsibilities
- Time management abilities and past behaviors
- Quantity of energy available to the individual
- Typical investments of time and energy

#### Characteristic Conflicts and Defenses

- What and how adequate are defenses and coping mechanisms and strategies?
- Assessment of the presence of debilitating anxiety or underlying conflicts



### *Cognitive Functioning*

- Intelligence, abilities, competencies, skills, hobbies, vocational competencies
- Style of thinking and thought organization

### *Affective and Interpersonal Characteristics*

- Recognition and integration of feelings, both positive and negative
- Possibility of any degree of underlying narcissism
- Interpersonal stance and modes of relating, particularly to women, peers, authority figures
- Capacity to give and receive love and support
- Capacity to establish and maintain healthy and personally satisfying relationships and friendships
- Ability to be comfortable and effective in group settings
- Potential for manipulative, clinging, superficial, aloof behavior or conflictual relationships
- Capacity for taking in feedback from others and using it constructively in personal growth
- Ability to empathize with others
- Ability to maintain appropriate closeness and distance in different contexts or relations
- Ability to relate comfortably and appropriately to authority

### **Sexual Maturity**

- Aspects of sexual history relevant to vocational choice, including orientation, identity, behaviors
- The individual's view of personal sexuality and the dimensions of celibacy; areas for formational growth
- Assessment of any psychodynamic meanings of the person's previous sexual experiences and expression
- Assessment of whether the individual's sexual experience or expression represent some tie to structural deficits in personality that may be resistant to further growth and maturation without intensive therapeutic intervention

Experience has demonstrated the existence of certain characteristics or traits that are negative predictors of vocational success. The evaluator's attention to the following areas will be of particular assistance:

### **Emotional**

- Difficulty incorporating and living out appropriate values
- Chronic distorted or very negative self-image that too strongly affects self-confidence and acceptance of others

- Self-preoccupation and acceptance of others
- Poor judgment, reality testing, regulation and control of drives
- Lack of capacity to empathize or relate emotionally
- Poorly developed or overly developed defenses
- Inability to function autonomously: dependent, regressive, needy behaviors or too-low frustration level

### **Historical**

- Repeated failures and responses
- History of treatment for serious mental disorder(s)
- Impulsive decision making in the past, or very recent decisions not well thought out
- Decisions based on an intense personal or spiritual experience

### **Motivational**

*Is there any indication that the candidate's desire to enter seminary/religious formation represents:*

- A desire to escape family, a life situation, or "self" issues
- Reaction to underlying insecurity and desire to cling to other(s) or to a system of support
- Overreaching ambition far beyond his intellectual or emotional capacity

## **PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENT**

The general purpose of the psychological assessment has been the elucidation of a candidate's overall personality portrait, both positive and negative, which points to his authentic availability for priestly formation. It is generally accepted that this portrait must be coordinated in a meaningful way with a knowledge of the individual's personality, motivation, and life experiences in order to represent a valid measure of psychological makeup. To have the best possible psychological evaluation of a candidate, it is important to have these background questions and formulation answered in the most holistic form so that psychometric testing can provide answers about definitive strengths and weaknesses in the individual's personality.

The psychologist is then in the best position to know which areas of the instruments will establish these dimensions of ability and availability. There are basically two forms of psychometric testing with some degree of complementarity, with indications of both severity and chronicity (amenability to change). For a more detailed overview, see Melvin C. Blanchette, S.S., "On Screening Seminarians Through Behavioral Assessment and Psychological Testing" (*Seminary Journal*, vol. 10, 1997).



## OBJECTIVE INSTRUMENTS

These types of instruments constitute measures of intelligence, reasoning ability, mental functioning, and general personality. They are psychological tests that have been in clinical usage over a period of time and possess reliability. In general, they present a picture of a particular individual in comparison with many others.

Intellectual capacity is often based largely on an individual's background achievement and individual presentation, but psychological measures such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) are designed to assess more definitively various aspects of intellectual ability. The highest level achieved is generally taken as the level of capacity, assumed that other factors (such as culture or illness) are considered.

When impairment is detected or functional level is below the clinical impression, testing might proceed to a Reitan Screening Test, Bender Gestalt Test, or Luria-Nebraska Test to ensure that no organically functional brain impairment exists. In practicality, however, these would be more likely encountered in clinical practice than in generally high-functioning candidates for the priesthood or religious life.

There are two widely accepted measures of personality, of which the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-II) is the more common. It consists of a 567-item question-and-answer test with internal measures of validity and reliability. The outcome is a graphic rating across nine personality characteristics with normative ranges and correlative combinations. The second measure is the Million Multi-axial Clinical Inventory III, which is a forced-choice 175-item test with some potential for more clinical specificity.

It should be borne in mind that personality tests are basically screening devices that compare an individual with many others. Therefore, they may be vulnerable when used without other instruments to miss character defects and to overidentify characteristics that may not impact availability for formation. Consequently, we strongly recommend that these objective instruments be combined with further projective assessments.

Why? In our experience, objective instruments tend to be relied upon to the exclusion of projective measures of personality. While there is a variety of completeness in the psychological screening of candidates, and while most dioceses, religious communities, seminaries and houses of formation focus on the MMPI-II for reasons of easy administration, cost-effectiveness, and normative comparisons, these objective instruments possess two genuine limitations:

they may miss many character traits that may be real limitations, and they do not discern individual strengths to compare with the expectations of the evaluators. The MMPI-II should remain an elementary instrument, but it should serve only as a basic instrument for further inquiry in a given area of concern.

## PROJECTIVE INSTRUMENTS

Projective tests are more definitive in reflecting the personality state of a candidate, with evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, and psychic themes and their chronicity. Like the definitive background and life-function questions presented earlier, these measures address the unique qualities that an individual may bring to a priestly or religious life or delineate features that preclude both the ability and availability for a meaningful, successful formation. While the tests are usefully complementary, one may not need to perform all of them, depending on whether or not previous indications suggested that more meaningful results could be obtained.

The Sentence Completion Test is the simplest to administer and consists of fifty incomplete phrases. While the test is very efficient, it can also be productive in combination with the results from other measures such as the personality inventories. In addition, the answers lend themselves to comparison with interview items and form the basis for further inquiry. For example, one might find specific instances or themes in this test that elucidate some area of personality characteristics developed in previous objective testing. In this way, it is often possible to differentiate between a personality trait and a more limiting disorder.

The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is one in which the subject is presented single drawings and requested to relate a story about each of them. The themes that emerge are the result of the projection of attributes onto something external, the basic mechanism of this category. Similar to the TAT is the House, Tree, Person Test, in which the subject draws an example of each. Observing the use of projection, the psychologist can then interpret which mechanisms predominate within the personality of the individual tested.

The most sophisticated and informative of the projective instruments is the Rorschach Inkblot Test, developed many years ago to provide the most rapid means of assessing underlying aspects of the personality. The most valuable perspectives gained are those of the severity of a given psychological dimension, its chronicity, and its availability to change. This provides a crucial element of assurance that



more severe problems are not overlooked and that elements amenable to change do not eliminate the individual with the potential for successful formation.

## FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENT

The overall goal of the psychological assessment of a candidate is to assess his true availability to enter viably into a formation program. Our experience tells us that a superficial approach to psychological assessment lends itself to troublesome difficulty and eliminates some candidates who have minor or very amenable psychological difficulties. It is our contention that a thorough psychological profile must be sustained, following the outline suggested earlier, and that it must be informed by both objective and projective measuring instruments. We further believe that only candidates who are basically healthy and show true signs of human wholeness and integration should be accepted. The overall goal of a therapist who works with seminarians is not to accomplish long-term therapeutic assistance. To the contrary, the seminary therapist is present to the seminarian as another formation person, to assist an already healthy individual to strengthen his personality and humanity and to teach coping mechanisms for unexpected tensions or instances that might arise during the course of seminary or formation life. It is our belief that, should a seminarian demonstrate during his time of formation that he is clearly in need of long-term therapy, he should be asked to leave the program until such time as the personal difficulties and obstacles have been adequately and properly resolved.

The best psychological evaluation will be one that genuinely reflects the candidate's basic capacity and future potential for inspired, active ministry. If the psychological component of the admission process is truly viable, it should be interactive (objective and projective testing) and individually based (following the outline suggested earlier). If these standards are in place, both the efficiency and the reliability of the psychological component of admission should be greatly enhanced, and authentic integration will occur. The use of coordinated reevaluation techniques over time (e.g., after a seminarian's pastoral or internship year) and the availability of psychological counseling as needed augment the initial psychological process in meaningful ways and ensure a better probability of successful priestly formation.

## GRACE BUILDS ON NATURE

The purpose of the time and expense connected with the psychological testing and portrait of a

candidate for the priesthood is expressed well in the Vatican Council's *Decree on Priestly Formation*: "Seminarians should . . . give witness to that unity by which men are attracted to Christ." The quality of this witness has been articulated with clarity and distinctiveness in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. As we have seen, this exhortation stresses the need for seminarians and priests who are humanly healthy, psychologically whole, and deeply committed to the heart of Christ in the church. Quoting the prophet Jeremiah, the exhortation's complete title is *Pastores dabo vobis iuxta cor meum*: the seminarian and priest is to place himself at the very heart of God.

Assuming a positive psychological assessment, fully complemented by the other components of the admission process, we affirm that the following skills should be evident in the prospective seminarian—components that will be developed in the course of priestly formation, thus demonstrating a "pastor" who sustains both the ability and availability for effective ministry as an ordained priest:

### Personal Life

- Openness and flexibility, demonstrated in the ability to adapt to change, coupled with a personal stamina that shows one to be a man of principle and conviction
- A sense of humor and an ability to be self-critical in an honest manner, exhibited in the recognition and acknowledgment of one's own shortcomings
- Good general physical health, exhibited in the ability to pace oneself to maintain physical, mental, and emotional stamina, and noninvolvement in substance abuse, sexual addiction, genital activity, or psychological problems within at least three years prior to application
- Good decision-making skills exhibited in the quality of life-management decisions made prior to application
- Good skills for economic management, exhibited by lack of indebtedness and appropriate economic stewardship
- A good grasp of basic etiquette skills and the ability to speak and write English in a manner acceptable for graduate studies
- Familiarity with and attraction to the Roman Catholic priesthood, exhibited by substantial Catholic background and personal acquaintance with priests

### Interpersonal Life

- Achievement of an adult level of psychosocial development, exhibited in healthy relationships



with family and friends, not being a "loner," and the ability to relate to a wide variety of people (e.g., adult women and men, senior citizens, youth, children)

- Capacity for celibacy, demonstrated in a well-defined faith, which leads to an ability to cope with loneliness and establish appropriate ongoing relationships

### Spiritual Life

- A developed life of faith, exhibited by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the church
- A developed routine of personal and communal prayer
- A personal devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, evidenced by regular attendance and participation in the Eucharist
- A rootedness in Catholic heritage, either by family background or, if by conversion to Roman Catholicism, having at least three years' experience as a Catholic beyond the date of baptism

### Basic Ministerial Skills

- Leadership ability exhibited through personal initiative and achievement in prior life decisions
- Ability to work cooperatively with others
- Ability to listen to others with care
- Ability to be compassionate and to empathize and yet be clear and firm when necessary
- Ability to communicate adequately in the English language, both orally and in writing

### Ministerial Experience

- A commitment to the promotion of social justice, seen in participation in some form of community service, parish involvement, or social action
- Some form of active involvement in a local parish or other Catholic community (e.g., liturgical ministry, religious education ministry, music ministry, social ministry)
- Familiarity with and experience of the ministerial requirements of the sponsoring diocese or religious community

In this time of increased need for vital and inspirational priests and religious, it is our hope that

our proposed process of assessment will ensure a fully dimensional exploration of the formation of viable candidates. We believe that such diligent effort will reward everyone with the best understanding of the individual who is making application for the priesthood. Virtually nowhere else is the axiom more applicable: Grace builds on nature.

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# God-Fearing

*James Torrens, S.J.*

I wake up attuned to my  
unflagging heart,  
a timepiece jazzy with its  
extra tick  
that shows up spiky on the  
doctor's chart.

My pre-owned Chrysler  
twice refused to start  
this week, and bodies too  
can play that trick  
I think when tuned to my  
unflagging heart.

The day ahead is plotting  
me a part  
I partly quail from,  
knowing just how quick  
I'll show up spiky on some  
critic's chart.

But the bravado of my  
faulty art  
(old labrador still  
swimming for its stick),  
drives me to honor my  
unflagging heart.

I have some hard-nut  
lesson to impart  
that cost me to digest. I'll  
make it stick  
but end up spiky on my  
students' chart.

So if today breaks with a  
glow, be smart  
and not begrudge it a  
descending wick  
I hear, attuned to my  
unflagging heart,  
pleased to be spiky on the  
master chart.

gin with, the word *fear* strikes fear—but that should not abort the conversation. We have the dictum of Sigmund Freud to fall back on: Where there is id, let there be ego. Where there is visceral reaction, let there be some reflection.

Here is one place to start. Most of our human reactions and emotions are two-sided. They have their positive valence and their negative, their aspect of threat and their promise, their excess and their healthy state. If we can say this of anger, sadness, or mirth, may we not apply it to that most primitive of our reactions, the one we may be most reluctant to talk about, fear? Fear—the old roiling in the gut and the cold sweat, not to mention its minor but more persistent forms—is vital to the human equipment, as well as to that of other species. When you corner or trap some animal or insect, think of the desperate thrashings provoked by its fear of extinction. In our own case, think of the sharp concern, the fear of fatality or illness or dire results, that leads us to vaccinations, to normal hygiene, to precautions in dealing with electricity.

Some adventurous bodies seem to need blessedly little fear. Along comes the boy or girl, for example, of whom adults say, with admiration but not a little concern, “He (or she) has absolutely no fear.” In that case, somebody else has to interpose the ordinary

**I**s there ever a time to speak of fear of the Lord? Since the topic has concerned me for most of a lifetime, I will attempt it, whether timely or not. To be-



prudence. I grew up with one such boy, who would jump out of his second-story window at the slightest encouragement and take on almost any other challenge. He lived through it all, thank God, and later made his living as a bill collector—a profession requiring more than a little courage.

Daring is a characteristic of adolescence, exploited by every military force in history. The Private Ryans of the world have to be in their late teens or early twenties to run through those blizzards of ammunition, though many of them have come off the Omaha Beaches with their hair whitened. I had little stomach for live ammunition when young, so I joined the high school Reserve Officer Training Corps band rather than march or practice with weapons. That phobia (or was it good sense?) did not keep me from threading the sea cliffs around San Francisco, though at my present age I experience nothing but amazement and trepidation while watching filmed coverage of rock climbers and other alpinists. No high edges for me!

To live without fear is a profound desire and should be the major goal of adult life. President Franklin Roosevelt announced Freedom from Fear as one of the four freedoms essential to democratic life. In this hemisphere, to say nothing of the others, the signs of such freedom are diminishing. Travelers to Latin America contemplate with dismay the better-off homes with broken bottles cemented into the tops of their protecting walls, plus watchdogs and even bodyguards. Gated communities and high-security systems play this role in the United States. In our culture of violence, where is the boundary line between ordinary prudence and unworthy self-sheltering? Precious few can mark it.

People today on subways and city streets treat each other warily, an attitude that feeds on racial stereotypes and the worst prejudices. In parks and hotel lobbies, how welcome the unencouraged smile or greeting from a passing stranger, if only we didn't have to keep that corner of suspicion about them. "You can't live that way," any sane person wants to shout at our urban and suburban protectiveness. I can raise this shout more readily than others because I do not have a family. On the other hand, bringing up fearful children can make civil society unlivable.

Fear can paralyze an individual. As Stephen Ambrose tells it in *Undaunted Courage*, this happened to a French voyageur with the Lewis and Clark expedition, which was so crucial in opening the American West. He was guiding their pirogue, their major supply ship, through dangerous water on the Upper Missouri River, when a squall hit, whirling the vessel around and out of control. He panicked and froze. All he could do was pray loudly. Another Frenchman, more adept and clear-headed, saved the vessel with its

crucial load. But paralysis in the face of crisis, though it can be deadly, seems to pale next to the debilitating effects of neurosis, the worries that sap us in daily life and take the spirit out of us. Psychoanalysts try to track all these phobias to their causes, and therapists try to treat them, but most of us just have to live with them as best we can.

So fear is no fun, to put it mildly, much as we may need it in the course of a day. The religious sphere, that uplifting medium, should take us, one would think, out of the reach of this unsettling and debilitating response. That was the opinion of the psychologist Erik Erikson, although he agreed that religion often has the exact opposite effect. As he wrote in *Childhood and Society*,

Trust born of care is the touchstone of the *actuality* of a given religion. All religions have in common the periodical childlike surrender to a Provider or providers who dispense earthly fortune as well as spiritual health; some demonstration of man's smallness by way of reduced posture and humble gesture; the admission in prayer and song of misdeeds, of misthoughts, and of evil intentions; and finally, the insight that individual trust must become a common faith, individual mistrust a commonly formulated evil.

## BEGINNING OF WISDOM

But what are we to make of the insistence in the Hebrew bible that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom? If one can be said to find a theme in the Book of Proverbs, fear of God is it. Ecclesiastes tells us, in phrasing typical of the wisdom tradition, "It shall be well with those who fear God" (8:12). Fully a third of the psalms that we still recite or intone in the church daily reiterate this declaration in one form or another. If truth be told, this religious imperative traces back, as does so much else, to the experience of the Jews at Mount Sinai, terrified by what was happening on the mountain: thunder, a dark cloud cover, and lightning bolts. According to the documentary tradition called Elohism, in particular, these desert wanderers plead with Moses to act as mediator for them: "You speak to us. Let not God speak, or we will die" (20:19).

This normal reaction of quailing before the divine was treated memorably by Rudolf Otto in his milestone book, *The Idea of the Holy*. Otto singles out two scriptural incidents in which mortals are overawed by the divine, aware to their fingertips of their unworthiness before the Holy One: Moses covering his face before the divine presence in the burning bush, and Saint Peter crying out, after the miraculous catch of fish, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). God's purpose in such moments is,



however, not to daunt but to hearten Moses and Peter and a series of others: from the boy Samuel and the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, plus Mary and Joseph and Paul of Tarsus, down to Margaret Mary Alacoque and Catherine Labouré and Bernadette Soubirous. This vivid experience of God's overwhelming greatness was for them a necessary threshold.

This chastened and wide-eyed sense of God's greatness, of who God really is, seems to be what the scripture means by "the beginning of wisdom." It played a special role in the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and in his particular grace of being able to find the Trinitarian God at any moment, even the most harried and busy. His own experience of the divine led Ignatius to propose reverence as a starting point in the religious life. He called it *acatamiento reverencial*—reverent obeisance, or profound respect. He put it as a first principle of the religious life that "we are made to praise, reverence, and serve God and thus to save our souls." In a physical form, no one seems to exhibit this reverence better than the Muslims, with their profound bow, forehead touching the earth, for prayer.

When commending the fear of God, the Hebrew testament does not prescribe a quaking anxiety, such as the trembling of the Jews in the desert. The sacerdotal writers of Deuteronomy had something much more calm in mind when telling the pious Jews "to fear the Lord all the days they live and teach their children to do so" (4:10). "What does the Lord your God require of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good?" (10:12). The Pentateuch identifies the fear of God with a morally conscientious and ritually observant life. The Hebrew ideal seems embodied in that welcome phrase of our language, "God-fearing."

The human being, even the most religious, is a mixed bag, to be sure, capable of selfish or heedless conduct at any moment. To say so takes us into that murky but unavoidable corollary of fear of God, the fear of consequences before the divine judge. The Jewish authors imply, and even make explicit, that in the case of anyone sorely tempted or already on a sinful path, the fear of consequences can play a salutary role. We have an imaginative homily on this topic in the Book of Jonah, concerning a prophet sent to the sinful Ninevites with dire predictions. To a person, they don sackcloth in repentance for their state of sin, and God is happy to spare them—much happier, it turns out, than his own prophet Jonah.

In the gospel of Luke, at the dying moment of Jesus on Calvary, we have a striking instance of Jewish piety asserting itself. When one of the criminals

crucified with him joins in the mockery, the other upbraids him: "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong" (23:40–41).

In the Bible texts that present the "fear of God" motif, one comes to recognize an accompanying strong emphasis on trust in God. The psalms in particular tend to this linkage, this alternating current, as when declaring that "many shall see and fear and put their trust in the Lord" (40:3). Psalm 115 makes the connection even tighter: "You who fear him, trust in the Lord" (v. 11). This union of logical contraries seems to be what gives the psalter as a whole its familiar tonality.

We find an excellent resume of this developing concept, fear of the Lord, in the Latin American edition of *Nueva Biblia Española*, produced by Luis Alonso Schokel, S.J., and Juan Mateos, S.J. Their concluding section on Old Testament vocabulary includes the following on "*temor de Dios*" (my translation):

In its original sense, fear of God is a component of the numinous; it is the awe of the creature in the presence of God; it is increased by the consciousness of sin which this presence reveals. This characteristic holds true of such primitive texts as Genesis 28 and persists in theophanies of punishment, such as certain psalms; in these the just and innocent person also feels overawed. Even when pardoning, God induces respect.

With time, the concept of fear comes to designate the religious feeling and, in terms of the Covenant, of faithfulness. So in Deuteronomy and in many psalms, the Hebrew word that etymologically means "fearful" actually signifies "faithful to God." This faithfulness includes, above all, fulfillment of the law of God, so that eventually, in wisdom literature, the two words practically become synonyms. There are texts where fear is put in parallel with love.

And there are many texts in which fear is put in parallel with wisdom. Job, at one point in his astonishing discourses, asks who knows the way to wisdom and answers in the only conceivable way: "God knows the way to it" (28:23). Later he concludes that God "saw wisdom and appraised it, gave it its setting, knew it through and through, and to man he said: 'Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and avoiding evil is understanding'" (28:27–28).

## TENSION BETWEEN TESTAMENTS

What happened to this bedrock conception in the Christian era? Catholic liturgy, from the start, showed enormous respect for Jewish piety, if not for the Jewish



community. By the fourth century, the psalms had won out over early church hymns as the official prayers of the church. Still, the focus had definitely changed. Within the Christian context, that staple of Jewish wisdom literature and of Deuteronomic piety—fear of the Lord—began shape-shifting. This was perhaps inevitable, an effect of the dictum of Saint John that “perfect love casts out fear” (I John 4:18).

The very first heresy, that of Marcion, unfortunately introduced a tremendous tension between the Hebrew and Christian testaments. Marcion made a sharp dichotomy between a supposed God of wrath, as found in the Hebrew Bible, and a God of mercy, as found in the New Testament. Despite constant refutation, the misreading has lingered and the tension persists. One can understand why, actually. There are Old Testament moments when one has to wonder. Someone is reportedly struck dead for trying to hold up the ark of the Covenant and keep it from falling. The death sentence is demanded for infractions of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:16) and is pronounced upon hostile populations. For the iniquity of the fathers, punishment is to be visited down to the third and fourth generations.

Often enough, the Hebrew Testament presents this “jealous” God, so concerned with the Israelites, in a severe profile. But what Marcion and friends fail to mention or attend to is the Bible’s insistence upon God’s merciful face. The pronouncement in Exodus about the effects of a parent’s sin on later generations comes as a codicil to the solemn moment of revelation and self-definition by God to Moses: “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6). Three psalms, the Book of Jonah, the Book of Joel, and, more subtly, other passages of the Bible repeat this characterization of God. Only ill will can really distort it.

Jesus himself intensified the kindly view of his Father. According to Adrian Laske, introducing the gospel of Saint Matthew in *The International Bible Commentary*, “Jesus described the kingdom of heaven [heaven being a Jewish substitute for the divine name] as a family, the children relating to God not as a stern judge but as their heavenly Father in trust, confidence and love.” Jesus imbued our prayer with his own familiar and even childlike approach to a dear “Abba.” He left us an unparalleled portrait of God’s anxious concern in the parable of the Merciful Father, long known as the parable of the prodigal son. The parable, truth to tell, has precedents—for instance, in Psalm 103: “As the tenderness of a father for his children, so is the Lord’s tenderness for those who fear him” (13).

Redemption through the death and resurrection

of Jesus Christ opened the access to eternal life. It also enormously increased the stakes. Jesus on the cross promised the good thief, “Today you will be with me in Paradise,” but the contumacious criminal with him brings to view the possibility of hell—eternal suffering and the loss of God—as a result of unfaithfulness. Wasn’t the latter something to be feared?

The most positive Christian approach to the fear of the Lord comes in the enunciation of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, a list taken from Isaiah’s prophecy that the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon the Messiah, “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (11:2). The Christians had to add one more to make up the mystic number of seven. As if to underline the final item, Isaiah repeats it: “And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord” (11:3).

In the Middle Ages, that high point of exclusively Catholic culture, Saint Thomas Aquinas worked out the traditional teaching on fear of the Lord in his encyclopedic *Summa Theologiae*. This brilliant and inspired spokesman of Catholic wisdom presents four multipart *Quaestiones* about the phenomenon of fear—its origins, its characteristics, its bodily and psychic and practical effects (*Pars Prima Secundae*, qq. 43 to 46). Later he discusses whether fear is or is not sinful (*Secunda Secundae*, q. 125). More to the point here, he devotes a full question (*Secunda Secundae*, q. 19) to fear of the Lord as one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Typically, his twelve articles, or subsections, turn on some fundamental distinctions.

Saint Thomas discusses worldly and human fear (*timor mundanus*), such as led Peter to deny Christ, and pronounces it without redeeming value, since it leads us away from God’s will. To be moral in the face of this fear sometimes requires incredible courage, so we cannot just brush it off. During the Nazi regime, there may have been only one man in Austria, Franz Jaegerstatter, who, resisting dire consequences, refused military conscription. He paid for his decision with his life.

The real concern of Thomas, and of Catholic tradition, turns on the difference between servile fear and filial fear, both of which keep us from sinning. The first, servile fear, is fear of punishment from some master. Servitude and its reactions are opposed to inner freedom, Thomas points out, and do not qualify as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Still, since servile fear will steer us toward what is good, it is not inimical to charity or to love of God. Filial fear, on the other hand, is the fear of offending persons we love—in this case, God—and of being separated from them. This fear is a gift, the church has always taught, and increases necessarily as our love of God increases. In



the postmodern world, so conscious of child abuse and excessive parental pressure, even filial fear may be a hard sell, to say nothing of what Thomas included along with it at one point: a wifely fear, or reverent respect, for her husband.

Churchmen, purportedly for the good of souls, seem often to have worked at fostering servile fear. We need only consult the fire-and-brimstone sermon inflicted on Stephen Daedalus in the pages of James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Joyce drew this sermon from *Hell Open to Christians*, the work of a Jesuit retreat master, Joseph Pinnamonte. Over the centuries, many have come to parish missions expecting a vivid presentation of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell. They have not been disappointed, except perhaps on the score of heaven. The preachers aimed usually at jostling the roughened conscience. It was, in fact, inculcated on us as seminarians not to neglect this fiery approach, because if, in a critical situation or severe temptation, one was not drawn by love of God, at least the fear of hell would prevent one from evil.

Saint Ignatius Loyola, in his *Spiritual Exercises*, works out of this traditional understanding in the opening phase, or First Week. For Ignatius, awareness of our sinful status is truly the beginning of conversion, of a long spiritual path, and this concern must often occupy all the available time a retreatant has. As high points of the First Week, nonetheless, Ignatius gives us the Colloquy with Christ on the cross and the Colloquy of Divine Mercy, and he fills the week with such bracing affections and considerations as shame for our ingratitude and recognition of God's unfailing love. Still, over the years, the striving for vivid effect very often prevailed over spiritual sensitivity, so that more than one superior of nuns found herself asking the retreat master to please not give the meditation on hell fires at the evening hour, just before sleep.

In this First Week, Ignatius provided multiple helps for examination of conscience and general confession, which he considered of prime importance. Ignatius himself, while still a layman, had raised a stir in Spain and even gotten himself jailed for daring to teach the difference between mortal and venial sin. He realized what a critical distinction it was; layman (how presumptuous!) or not, somebody had to make it clear. For persons of more sensitive conscience, or even the ordinarily faithful, the church did not do a uniformly good job of making this distinction clear. In hindsight, it seems to have both multiplied mortal sin and lessened the requirement of full consent.

For all but the most levelheaded Catholics, the whole moral spectrum was given something of a red shift by the appending of a grave obligation to so

many things—the Communion fast, Friday abstinence, the total recitation of the breviary by priests and other obliged religious—and by a readiness to find grave matter in sexual thoughts, words, and impulses. If the pendulum has swung way out in the other direction, well, that is what pendulums do. In short, for many conscientious people, the wrong kind of fear of God blocked good sense, perspective, and, in fact, real devotion. Pierre Charles, a Belgian Jesuit scripture scholar and spiritual writer, was not so far off track in his wry observation, a half century ago, that “we have Christ under the old law.”

## FEAR NOT

A few years ago, in my mother's house in San Francisco, we discovered a pocket calendar that my father had kept for the year 1917, many years before their marriage. In it he marked “Confession” every Saturday. That recalled to me a whole era of the highly sensitive conscience and closely regulated practice. The Sacrament of Penance has for many decades now been a casualty of the pendulum effect. Was this a rebound from the promotion of servile fear? Many practicing Catholics look askance at confession, not aware or convinced that its real focus is ecclesial rather than individualistic—an emphasis made by renaming it the Sacrament of Reconciliation (and thus returning it to its origins). Many more feel confused about the purpose or benefits of this practice, given the ever-available mercy and forgiveness of God. And many, as in the old days but with a sense of the sacrament having diminished status, just keep putting it off.

Parishes, on the whole, do well in planning the communal celebrations of penance for Advent and Lent. For many reasons, though, including the paucity and busyness of priests, they come up short of helpful modes and availability the rest of the time. Any priest knows how much genuine contrition, honesty, change of heart, and spiritual sensitivity take place in the privileged encounter of this sacrament. The Reformation did a major disservice in abolishing it. But one has to regret all the contribution to guilt feelings—that is to say, the poor understanding of the scope of God's mercy, tangible in this sacrament and in some neurotic behavior connected with it.

I suppose I speak here as my father's son, and as someone who was mightily drawn to put the accent on perfect observance in religious life when I entered it half a century ago. In the course of intervening years—busy years of teaching, writing, and direct ministry—confession, in its paradoxical way, has kept my compulsivity going but also provided a continuous antidote of spiritual direction, as well as access



to divine compassion and mercy. Therapy, spiritual direction, and confession are supposed to be very distinct spheres—the first, I gather, to deal directly with one's fears, the second to foster filial reverence in our prayer, and the third to absolve our failures in the love of God. I have had recourse almost exclusively to the last of these means as all-purpose. That is the way most religious my own age have struggled through one hampering influence or another.

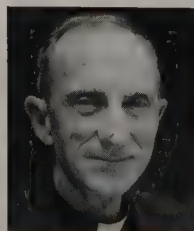
From the beginning of religious life, the figure and example of Jesus Christ has been galvanizing for me—thanks to *The Life of Christ* by Alban Goodier; to devotion to the Sacred Heart as the embodiment of God's love; to Bible scholars such as Lucien Cerfaux and F. X. Durrwell, who were eloquent about the effects of the resurrection of Jesus; and to the Ignatian contemplations on the life of Christ. The thing that I probably got most wrong was an ascetical notion presented to us in the Latin phrase *agere contra*, which means "to act against." I interpreted this to mean "act against the sensual life and instincts," which it actually did mean and can and often should. However, at a more essential level, I now consider *agere contra* to mean "to move, and to let yourself be moved, in a way contrary to your shadow." That does not mean to hate your shadow or deny your shadow or avoid it. It does mean, in my reading, to proceed in the opposite direction by taking the positive tack and benefiting from God-given energy, humor, and courage. I know, in other words, that in the face of fears of offending God, I must celebrate the goodness of God and the opportunities of choice, the great gift of human liberty. Our childhood stage of life limits choices while developing abilities; adolescent and early adult life, the period that Erikson called "the psychosocial moratorium," offers a smorgasbord of choices for sampling; adult life presents a path with continual forks and decisions of moment. Something in me has been afraid of the consequences of wrong decisions and has kept me wondering, during all the responsibilities of Catholic priesthood, in the words of T. S. Eliot, "How can I presume?"

A basic trust, I realize, has carried me through. This gift my parents must have fostered in me at the earliest age, to entrust myself pretty readily to others. Metaphysically, though, something has kept me feeling much less of that trust. So where does the trust come from? From faith. From recognition and acceptance that this is the way to go, that God keeps treating me with immense generosity and has given me extraordinary freedom to respond. The worst thing about religious fearfulness, along with other types of compulsivity, is the diminished liberty, the hampered will with which it leaves us. One of the standard counsels to the scrupulous has been to go

ahead, as it were, on overdrive, instinctively, without stopping to think about or measure whether one is doing right or wrong. Why? Because measuring, for such people, is going to cause paralysis. Still, the diagnosis has to be that such a person, acting this way, is not fully human. To be truly human, to be in God's image, means to be clear about choosing and doing the good, and to rejoice in the special opportunity we have to act in God's image.

All of which brings me back to the famous First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius, and leads me to admit how difficult, in my annual retreats, I have found this set of meditations, entirely for the wrong reasons—for anxiety or numbness of sensibility or for their antique (read late-medieval) cast, rather than due to the challenge of genuine contrition. David Fleming, S.J., author of a *Contemporary Reading of the Exercises*, began insisting years ago that the only person ready to approach the full Exercises is one convinced of the goodness and love of God, with a real experience of the divine care in his or her own life. Such a person, when starting the Exercises with the "Principle and Foundation"—that answer to the old catechism question, "Why did God make me?"—begins with the conviction that God creates out of a loving initiative, to communicate the good.

This is the sort of God we have. It is the Creator as revealed in the opening chapter of *Genesis*, who looks on the entirety of creation, but man and woman above all, and sees that it is good. It is the Lord "merciful and gracious" who has chosen, formed and guided a people after his own heart, learning infinite patience along their desert way. It is the Father of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd who gathers us in a company of mutual respect and adult loving response. It is the Holy Spirit, the gift and the love of God, superior to whatever may daunt, trouble, mystify, or seem to reduce us in dignity and importance. It is the Holy One who, for every mission of importance to us and every day of our life, precedes each challenge to our liberty with an unmistakable "Fear not."



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# Ministry Through a Web Page

*George Eppley*

**T**he 1977 Vatican document granting my request for laicization after twenty-seven years in the active ministry contained some strict conditions. I was not to celebrate mass, preach, or be a lector, nor was I to administer the sacraments or teach theology in Catholic schools. I have strictly observed those conditions for the past twenty-three years, but at times it has been painful.

I loved to celebrate mass and preach, and I had good role models to emulate. After my ordination in 1949, I was sent to be a curate at Saint Mary Church in Elyria, Ohio, where Monsignor William L. Newton was pastor. He had taught me scripture at Saint Mary Seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, and had for many years before been a scripture professor at the Catholic University of America. He had translated the Gospel of St. John for the new Confraternity edition of the New Testament and translated the minor prophets for the Old Testament edition.

Newton had great reverence for the Word of God and insisted that his curates never enter the pulpit unless they were fully prepared. He urged me to write out my homilies (then called sermons) for the first five years of my ministry. I wrote them not only for five years but for twenty-seven years. I double-spaced them on three sheets of paper so that I would preach for no more than ten minutes. Sometimes the homily

came easily, but many times it was drudgery. Often I would log fifteen hours on the typewriter before I was satisfied with the product.

I met other liturgical role models early in the 1950s, when a few Cleveland priests and I started attending the annual National Liturgical Conference, usually held in late August in various cities. We participated in beautiful liturgies and heard outstanding homilies and lectures from such liturgical greats as Godfrey Diekmann, Martin Hellriegel, Gerald Sloyan, Frederick McManus, Robert Hovda, Clifford Howell, and Bill Leonard. We returned to our diocese and reported that soon the mass would be in the vernacular, with the celebrant facing the people; the Holy Week liturgy would be completely revised; the Easter Vigil would be the high point of the liturgical year; and women would have ministerial (but nonsacramental) roles in the church. Those conventions gave us a greater appreciation of the liturgy and the importance of the Sunday homily. Many of our fellow priests, however, labeled us as crackpots.

I still have the desire to celebrate mass and preach, but I will not ask the Vatican to lift the sanctions it placed upon me. Nor will I join the Corps of Resigned Priests United for Service (CORPUS). While I respect CORPUS for lobbying Rome and the American hierarchy to allow resigned priests to function



again in the active ministry, I do not want to return to active ministry in a system that discourages dissent, discriminates against women, and is closed to dialogue on such issues as optional celibacy and women priests.

One should not infer from that last sentence that I am a malcontent, nursing grudges against the church. In fact, I am on good terms with my bishop and pastor. My wife and I, on two occasions, hosted events that brought together the bishop and resigned priests and their spouses. As a member of the board of contributors of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* for ten years (1984–94), I wrote op-ed pieces in support of the church's position on abortion, Catholic schools, and capital punishment. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT—certainly not a haven for whiners bent on stunting readers' spiritual and intellectual growth—has published four articles I have submitted over the past decade.

John Gardner once wrote that institutions fail because their lovers are not critical enough and their critics are not loving enough. In recent months I have found a new pulpit where I can, in Gardner's words, be a loving critic and a critical lover. My new pulpit is my Web page—designed, installed, and maintained by my wife, Anita, who has infinitely more patience than I with the new technology. I call the Web page "The Eppley Files." While the Vatican document said I could not preach, it did not say that I could not write. Many of my writings can be found in the Eppley Files.

The idea for this new pulpit evolved over a couple of years. A few years ago, when I retired from teaching at a community college, I developed a three-cassette audiotape program titled *Looking Back and Learning*. Categories such as movies, books, the media, travel, people, and school helped me to tell stories about some significant persons and events in my seventy years of life.

When the cassettes were marketed, I was invited to talk to elderly citizens at retirement homes, college elder campuses, libraries, bookstores, and parish centers. Talking to such groups has been rewarding—and fun—because older audiences are so receptive. I have entertained them but, more important, I have also

challenged them to ponder seriously what they will do with the rest of their lives.

It gradually occurred to me that even without traveling around the state, county, or city to reach an audience, I can, through the Internet, reach hundreds and eventually thousands of people who are longing for spirituality.

My Web page enables me to emulate Jesus, who told stories about daily life to reach the minds and hearts of people. He told stories drawn from family life (a prodigal son and his jealous brother), stories related to commerce (the coin of tribute, a shepherd losing a sheep, a debtor being hauled into court); and stories about nature (the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, good soil and bad).

In my Web page, I too am trying to reach the minds and hearts of people. I use selections from homilies that I have saved and updated, journal entries, essays, reflections, and stories about movie stars, teachers, physically challenged students, businesspersons, travelers, entertainers, prisoners, fictional characters, musicians, and ordinary people walking their pets in the park.

I have not looked at that Vatican dispensation since I received it twenty-three years ago, because I fear it would elevate my blood pressure considerably. But, upon reflection, I now realize that while it took away my priestly functions, it reminded me that I am still a priest. That being the case, Saint Paul's advice (2 Timothy 4:1–5) applies to me as it did to Timothy: "I charge you to preach the word, to stay with this task, whether convenient or inconvenient—correcting, improving, appealing—constantly teaching and never losing patience. . . . As for you, perform your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

Through my Web page, I am trying to do that.



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# Priesthood in Transition

Reverend Stephen J. Rossetti, Ph.D., D.Min.

*Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.*—Mark Twain, in a cable sent from London to the Associated Press, 1897

**T**oday, some powerful forces are undermining not only our society but also the Catholic priesthood. Respect for authority figures is low. The American idealism of the 1950s and John F. Kennedy's "Camelot" have been dismantled. In their wake came the race riots of the 1960s, the disaster that was the Vietnam War, the scandal of Watergate, and the sordid affair between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. Americans have taken on a general attitude of distrust toward their leaders and cynicism about true goodness. Now, when new leaders of prominence enter the public arena, their motives are suspect, and the media are obsessed with exposing their weaknesses.

Attitudes about the priesthood have changed in the same way. For a long time, the Catholic priesthood was enthroned as an icon of goodness and an icon of God. Now, the public has been made aware of the very real weaknesses of some of our priests, particularly their inappropriate sexual conduct. For several years, the media, at the unspoken behest of the public, has pursued the priesthood with a vengeance.

There are other devastating forces at work today.

The concepts of sacrifice, discipline, life-long commitment, chastity, and service are not in vogue in our disposable world. Society has become replete with narcissism, materialism, and a pervasive sexual obsession. However, our priests' lives witness to values exactly opposed to these societal trends. Priests' hours are long, their rewards are not material, their celibate commitment is a societal anathema, and their self-sacrificing life of service is increasingly incomprehensible.

Some people wonder why more young men do not become priests. Given these trends, I see every vocation as tantamount to a miracle. Such bursts of generosity and self-sacrifice cannot be explained solely by human forces; a true priestly vocation today seems more like a direct intervention by God. Father Richard Marzheuser's article in *Seminary Journal* (Fall 1999), "A New Generation Is on the Rise in Seminaries," is instructive. Marzheuser writes that the new generation of seminarians "speak quite frankly of mystical experiences associated with the call they are following." More than a few of them relate specific moments of grace when God touched them and called them to priesthood. Given the times in which we live, perhaps this direct intervention of grace is necessary.

Understanding the times in which we live, it is not surprising that the numbers of priests are dropping—rapidly. While new vocations have risen slightly over



the past few years, they are not nearly enough to maintain our current clerical strength. According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, the average age of all priests in the United States is 60; nearly one-quarter are over 70 years old. Thus, in a few years, there will be many fewer active priests. People are concerned. Actually, I think we are all a bit frightened.

Some, taking stock of the declining numbers of priests and the public scandals, have declared that the priesthood is "rotting" or "collapsing." One religious leader spoke of trying to "hold the diocese together" until vocations pick up. Others have taken a defensive posture: they are trying, as long as possible, to stem the tide of changes "demolishing" the church. A common, largely unspoken fear is that we are being dragged closer and closer to a precipice, soon to be thrown over and destroyed.

There are pervasive rumors of a morale problem among priests. However, when surveys are conducted, morale seems to be quite high. A 1993 study by the National Federation of Priests Council (NFPC) found that 91 percent of priests were "utilizing their important skills and abilities in their ministry" and only 7 percent were thinking of leaving the priesthood. When asked what aspects of the priesthood they found the most satisfying, they cited "administering the sacraments and presiding over the liturgy," along with "preaching the Word" and the "opportunity to work with many people and be a part of their lives." Similarly, in my own 1992 study of 314 priests, a large majority (73 percent) endorsed the statement, "Overall, I am satisfied with the Catholic church today." To be a priest is indeed to have a meaningful life with considerable personal satisfaction.

What may be behind the morale problems, at least partially, is not the dissatisfaction of priests with their own ministries, but an inability to respond to the growing needs of the people and a fear that there will be no one to take their places when they are gone. Indeed, the 1993 NFPC study noted a growing complaint by priests about the "unrealistic demands and expectations of laypeople" and, similarly, their concern with "too much work." This is coupled with confusion, in the midst of all the modern changes, about what the actual role of the priest will become. An increasing number of the important duties of priests are now being performed by the laity.

In short, some priests are afraid that the entire church system will crumble. They have worked a lifetime to build up the kind of church that they believed in, and now it seems to be breaking down before their eyes. They are working harder and harder to maintain the priesthood as it was and are frightened that they will eventually have to shoulder a bur-

den that they simply cannot bear. There is a gnawing fear that perhaps the prophets of doom are correct. This fear of an imminent collapse is debilitating for some and corrosive of the morale of many.

## **VICTIM STANCE**

In my work with priests, I have noticed that more than a few are in danger of falling into a victim stance. In the face of powerful societal trends, priests who have succumbed to a victim stance feel passive and powerless. Their gaze is focused backward at the golden years of "Camelot" and the idealism of the 1950s. They view the current situation as a marked decline from the past. Those caught in a victim stance may be filled with an increasing, implacable anger and often look outside themselves for someone to blame for their predicament. Ultimately, they are psychologically stuck and see no way out.

Underneath all the negativity, anger, blaming, powerlessness, and passivity, the victim's plight is one of fear. I hear undercurrents of this negativity when prophets of doom forecast the decay of the priesthood. I detect undercurrents of this fear when priests exult unrealistically in the church of the past and completely excoriate the church of the present. I see this lapse into powerlessness when we look toward the future and find little that is good. The victim is paralyzed by fear and lives without hope.

For those assisting people through psychotherapy or spiritual direction, it is important to recognize when clients have become stuck in a victim stance. Therapists and directors need to be alert for such symptoms as implacable inner anger or rage, underlying fear and passivity, chronic low-grade depression, and pervasive cynicism. It is indeed true that being in touch with the ways one has truly been victimized in the past can be helpful, if not essential, to the healing process. However, therapists and spiritual directors do their clients a disservice if they do not eventually assist them in moving beyond the victim stance.

## **VILIFYING MALE AUTHORITIES**

I believe that some priests today are feeling increasingly like victims—powerless in the face of overwhelming and seemingly destructive trends. Speaking of priests as being disempowered might seem absurd to some, since priests are still viewed as having considerable authority in the church and in society. But I believe this is not the felt experience of priests today. Many of us, both young and old, recall a golden era when the priest's life was different. In those days, vocations were plentiful, everyone went to



mass, the priest was respected, the church was obeyed, and people's lives centered on their parish church. All this has changed.

Other trends negatively affect our priests today. One of these is a tendency to vilify males. Being a male is clearly out of vogue today. Television shows of the 1950s, such as "Father Knows Best," which idealized the role of the male authority figure, have been replaced with sitcoms portraying males as socially inept and interpersonally clumsy. As one television critic put it, "We have gone from 'Father Knows Best' to 'Father Is an Idiot.'" The message is clear: being a male today is not okay.

A priest's feeling of disempowerment not only results from his being a male in today's society; it also stems from his being an authority figure. As noted, our society's respect for authority figures has plummeted. One elderly priest told me that he is shocked by what some parents say to him today. He recalls the days when he was a young priest treated with respect.

The priest's sense of disempowerment also comes from being a member of a group whose ranks are rapidly thinning. "More is better" it seems, and since we have fewer priests, many people conclude that this is a negative statement about priesthood in general and perhaps priests in particular. It is difficult for older priests to feel affirmed when there are few, if any, young, eager priests to take their places. It naturally invites the questions "What is wrong with me?" and "What is wrong with the priesthood?"

## REEMPOWERING PRIESTS

Since disempowerment is central to maintaining a victim stance, the healing process will necessarily focus on reempowerment. Victims feel that no matter what they do, nothing will change. They believe that they cannot affect the present and are impotent to direct the future. They feel that their voices will not be heard and that they have no influence to change anything of significance.

How can we reempower our priests today? Or, more appropriately, how can we help priests help themselves? I propose a four-step process.

**Remembering Realistically.** In this first step of conversion, we recall the church of the past. It is important to bring to mind the way things were before the 1960s, when our current cohort of senior priests was newly ordained. There were many wonderful aspects to the church of those days. In clergy workshops, I ask participants to name their good memories. They recall that church life was clearer back then; there was a clearer priestly identity and

clearer teaching. They remember the mystery of the mass, an abundance of vocations, respect for priests, plenty of sisters in our schools, a strong priestly fraternity, everyone going to mass and confession, an easier assignment process, and mass everywhere in the same language. These are only some of the many good memories our priests have of the past. For these wonderful things, we as a presbyterate should give thanks—and we should grieve their loss today.

However, this first step of realistic remembering must not stop here. Those caught up in a victim stance often engage in euphoric recall. That is, they easily remember the good things of the past but forget those things that were not ideal. Many priests today, young and old, have fallen into euphoric recall; they idealize the past and excoriate the present. A more realistic remembering is an important part of moving out of a victim stance.

The next part of this first step is to recall the aspects of our past church that were not so good. Whenever I do this in priest workshops, the participants quickly begin to remember things they had forgotten. They recall such realities as triumphalism, no lay involvement, little ecumenism, black-and-white attitudes, lack of input in decision making, no collaboration, and lack of flexibility, to name just a few.

What clearly emerges from this first step is a complex picture of a past church that had many admirable qualities and many not-so-admirable qualities. It is important to neither idealize nor excoriate the church of the past. It was the church of its day, and it served the needs of the people to the best of its ability. We give thanks for the hard work and dedication of those who ministered in this church. We grieve for the wonderful aspects that are gone, and we must let them go.

**Facing and Living in the Present Church.** As we let go of the church of the past, our gaze naturally rests on the church of today. And just as we realistically appraised the church of the past, we need to do the same with the church of today. When I ask priests to name the negative points of the church today, I usually receive a flood of answers: no vocations, no respect for priests, unclear identity, too much work, too many meetings, everything being complicated. They are very clear about what they do not like about the church today.

Then I ask them about the good points of today's church. This is usually much harder for them, but after some coaxing, they slowly and tentatively put forth a few observations. They begin to speak about more lay involvement, more collaboration, ecumenism, lay vocations, the permanent diaconate, the



Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Bible studies, preaching the Word, the documents of Vatican II, social justice, the writings of John Paul II, more input in decision making and assignments, and the pro-life movement. As the list starts to grow, the group becomes aware of a truth emerging.

It starts to become obvious that not only is the church of today not about to crumble; there are actually some wonderful and exciting new developments. In fact, when priests start to become really honest with themselves, most have to admit that they really do not want the church to go back to the way it was. The church of today, despite its many weaknesses, is probably the appropriate church for responding to the needs of the day and is actually better for our needs, too. As one bishop shared with me, "Speaking just for myself, I might joke about the advantages of being a bishop in supposedly more glorious times, but in truth there is no other period in history in which I would rather live and minister than the one God happened to put me in."

**Envisioning the Church of the Future.** The third step in this empowerment process is to envision possibilities for the future. Looking at the dynamic parts of the church today, we should be able to take these buds of new life and begin to envision an even better church. An essential part of moving beyond the victim stance is to be able to dream of a better future. There seem to be several emerging possibilities for the future:

- Any vestiges of triumphalism are waning quickly in today's humbler church, whose recognized call is one of service. Pope John Paul II has set the stage for this humbler church in his many public apologies, including his words of atonement to the Jewish people, to women, to Galileo, for the "errors" of the Inquisition, and for the "oppression" of Native Americans. In conjunction with this call to service is a pressing need for accountability. Our church leaders are struggling for ways to be accountable to the people they serve and yet maintain their rightful freedom in preaching the gospel. Regular evaluations of pastors by parishioners is one increasingly popular means used by dioceses. Parish councils and diocesan pastoral councils are additional conduits for a mutual exchange of viewpoints. The church of the future will look to ways to be increasingly accountable and thus of service.
- The priesthood will be leaner and strongly committed. As the numbers of priests dwindle, pastoral needs rise, and societal values continue to be contrary to their vocations, priests will of ne-

cessity be strongly and personally committed, motivated by their "mystical" vocation, and living a "missionary" life in their own land; many are filled with a strong dedication to evangelization. The vision that comes to mind is a strong, small band of men ardently committed to the faith, to the church, and to the pope, motivated by a personal relationship with God, and courageously ministering in a society that largely rejects their values. This may seem a bit idealistic, but there are signs that it is already happening. Perhaps we are witnessing a purification of the priesthood.

- The laity will minister side-by-side with the clergy. As the numbers of priests dwindle, we already are seeing a wonderful surge in vocations to lay ministry. The numbers of priests and religious will be smaller, but multitudes of lay vocations are springing up. Successful priests of the new millennium will know how to invite, train, and work hand-in-hand with the laity. Collaborative leadership will be a must.
- The church is becoming a community of connection. It is connecting with other denominations, it is reaching out in dialogue to other faiths; it is trying to appreciate the importance of the secular sciences; and it has engaged in a dialogue with the world. To cite a few examples, the Catholic church recently signed a joint declaration on justification by faith with the Lutherans, and the pope has called for more steps toward unity. Also, the pope's new encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, speaks of a right appreciation of the role of reason and philosophy, and declares that faith is not contrary to human reason. As the church connects with other faiths and with the world, the challenge will be to discern what elements of these other faiths and the world embody aspects of the truth and thus strengthen the faith, and what elements are corrosive of the truth and need to be rejected.
- Finally, diversity will be the norm. There will be an increasing diversity of cultures and races, a multiplicity of theological viewpoints, a strong presence of both genders, and an explosion of languages, rites, and spiritual expressions. For example, every Sunday in the Archdiocese of New York, mass is celebrated in forty different languages, and the sacraments are offered in about fifty. The priest of tomorrow will have to be comfortable with diversity, not only within his congregation but also within the priesthood itself. His job will be to cultivate unity and tolerance in the midst of diversity. The church's discernment will be to understand which aspects of diversity add to the glory of God and the strength of the church, and to identify those differences corro-



sive of unity and needing to be challenged. The church's dialogue with the world, other faiths, and other cultures cannot be an uncritical one.

These emerging possibilities are only examples of current trends that are likely to become part of the church of tomorrow. However, it may be that I have discerned incorrectly. The church of the new millennium may be much different than the one I just envisioned. Numerous unforeseen forces impinging upon our church may require it to shift and develop in completely new directions.

However, the "what" of the future is less critical than the perspective we bring to that future. We may be completely wrong about what the substance of the future will bring, but we will never be wrong about the Christian optimism and faith in God's work that we need to bring to that future.

What is remarkable, I believe, is that God, with boundless generosity, has made human beings cocreators. Thus, I believe that God will give us a great deal of flexibility in fashioning the church of the future.

If asked what the church of the new millennium will look like, I would respond, "What do you want it to look like?" You and I, even now, are building that church of our dreams. This is an enormous responsibility and a wonderful and exciting challenge. God has entrusted his church to us. Let us build a great one.

**Determining Role in the Church of Today and Tomorrow.** After the first three steps—remembering and letting go of the past, facing the church today as it truly is, and envisioning an even better church for tomorrow—the fourth step is to roll up our sleeves and begin to help build that church.

This fourth and last step in the empowerment process involves personal discernment. In order to understand how he himself can participate directly in this building of the church, the priest—perhaps with the assistance of a mentor or director—should take stock of his own gifts and talents, as well as the particular ministry to which he is called: Am I a parish priest, chaplain, teacher or professor, administrator, or confessor? What are my particular talents? Perhaps I have the gift of compassion and healing, or it may be that I am a good preacher, organizer, or teacher, or perhaps I have a special gift for prayer. Any and all of these gifts and ministries can and must be used in the building up of the church. When a priest begins to take stock of what he has been given and how he himself can participate personally and directly in the future ministry of Jesus, he will necessarily begin to feel empowered; he will experience a sense of purpose, perhaps even a new enthusiasm for his priestly vocation.

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**Is it unrealistic to expect our priests to have a hope-filled, visionary stance toward the future, given the turmoil and negative signs of the present?**

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The priest who begins to think like this has not only begun to dream of a better future; he has also begun to participate in building that future. He is no longer a victim; he has become an empowered visionary.

#### **VISIONARY STANCE**

I would like to suggest that instead of being stuck as victims, we priests need to become people of vision, or visionaries. In this sense, I am not referring to a visionary as someone who has a gift of clairvoyance about the future. A visionary is not someone who miraculously divines future events. The term *visionary* refers rather to an approach or stance toward the future. Instead of being a passive victim, the visionary priest is called to be active and empowered. When the priest feels empowered, he is then able to empower others in the faith community.

In addition, the priest as visionary is someone with a hope-filled view of the future. He is passionate and enthusiastic. I am reminded of the root of *enthusiasm*, which is the Greek *en theos*, which means "to be possessed by God." Being active and passionate, the priest takes responsibility for his own actions and is filled with hope as he assists in building the church of the future.

Is it unrealistic to expect our priests to have such a hope-filled, visionary stance toward the future, given the turmoil and negative signs of the present? Perhaps it is unrealistic, from a worldly perspective; but our hope cannot be based on a secular vision. Rather, the eyes of faith give us a new hope and a new



vision. If our grace-filled vocations are truly alive, I believe that we are given the seeds of this hope. If we nurture these seeds carefully, we will be transformed into people of hope.

## PAINFUL TRANSITION

The priesthood is in a painful time of transition, and priests feel squeezed by unrealistic expectations and competing notions of the church. We have one leg in the "Camelot" of the 1950s and another in a largely unknown future. We see vocations dropping and pastoral needs rising; we feel older and more tired.

I think that today's "morale" crisis has less to do with whether priestly ministry is satisfying—because it always has been and always will be—than with the priesthood itself and its future. It may be that we are working harder than ever, with no end in sight, to maintain a style of priesthood whose day has passed. And we cannot help wondering, "Will I be able to bear up under my increasing load? Will there be anyone to take my place? Will the priesthood for which we all have sacrificed survive?"

While recognizing and validating our very real and understandable hurts and fears, we ought to be careful that these hurts and fears do not congeal into a paralyzing victimhood. From a larger perspective, it is nonsense to speak of the priesthood dying out. Christ himself established the priesthood. It has survived and prospered for 2,000 years. The words of Mark Twain ring true: "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." The priesthood will not die.

What is dying, however, is a particular form of the priesthood. And while the external form that the priesthood takes is ever changing, the underlying substance will never change. The priesthood will always be intrinsically connected with such fundamental realities as preaching the Word, sacraments, pastoral care, and evangelization. Most of all, the priesthood is forever and inextricably linked to the Eucharist.

Nevertheless, the transitory form of the priesthood is passing away, and for many, this feels like a death. It is critical that we face this loss, grieve it, and move

on. If we become stuck as victims, we will become prisoners of a church whose day is gone; we will miss the dynamic church of today and the exciting dreams of tomorrow; we will miss the life-giving new forms that our fundamental realities will take.

Ultimately, the challenge presented to us is the challenge of faith. What could be more contrary to the faith than to be stuck in powerlessness, anger, and fear? It is faith that transforms our human pains and fears into courage and hope. In the final analysis, we believe that it is God who is in charge. It is God who is building this church through us and with us. We have no reason to be paralyzed by our fears and every reason to be full of hope. Even now, if we are honest with ourselves, many signs of new life in this church are emerging.

The people of God need their priests to join hands with them and to create a new vision. They need their priests to step forward with them in courage and faith. The faithful need their priests to work with them in building the future.

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# Stress in Community

*Mary Elizabeth Kenel, Ph.D.*

I first addressed the topic of stress in the lives of women religious in an article based on research I had conducted with members of two religious communities, one of which identified itself as traditional, the other as transitional. That article, "Stress in the Lives of Women Religious" (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Summer 1998), drew a response from Reverend Peter Lourdes, S.D.B., a psychologist working with several communities of women religious in India. His findings, which were remarkably similar to my own, were reported in my article "Convent Stress Revisited" (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Spring 1999). As the topic of stress seemed to resonate across national lines, additional responses addressing this topic were invited. This article presents a sampling of stress-inducing difficulties that were identified by our respondents, as well as some thoughts on stress management.

Among the sources of stress identified, one of the most problematic was that of "wearing too many hats." While the problem of holding two or more positions of responsibility (e.g., principal of a school and local superior) was not uncommon, one of our respondents indicated that she was wearing three hats—as local superior, director of novices, and councilor on her community's provincial leadership team. In addition, this sister also wore a fourth hat in her

role as spiritual director to a number of laypeople who sought her services in the local parish. Although this sister had recognized that she possessed qualities that would tend to result in her selection for some sort of leadership role, she felt overwhelmed by the number of responsibilities thrust upon her simultaneously.

Although the problems that led to this sister's being overutilized by her community are multifaceted, one major issue was the community's perception that there were not enough qualified, healthy sisters to take on leadership positions. This problem was not limited to the provincial level by any means. Because of reductions in the number of sisters, the province in which this sister serves will soon merge with a second. Nevertheless, the general council of this community has refused to draw upon the resources of the combined group to select another member for the leadership team and ease the burden on this sister. Although recognizing that her education has to some extent groomed her for leadership, this sister reported feeling extremely pressured to accept her three roles and highly stressed in the performance of her duties.

Clearly, the sharp reduction in the number of sisters available for all sorts of ministerial positions, including community leadership positions, is a gen-



uine problem. Nevertheless, one must question the practice of overloading a few people to such an extent that their ability to live satisfying lives as well as function adequately in their positions is compromised. One respondent who offered suggestions for stress management, Sister Teresa Joseph, F.M.A., noted the need on the part of the communities to develop the talents of the members and to invest in education. She identified certain sisters as builders—that is, people who have sufficient vision to identify the talents of their sisters and who have made it a point to provide the necessary opportunities, support, and encouragement to develop them. In her opinion, by investing in education, the sisters are able to acquire the confidence and competence required to fulfill their mission. Enhancing the confidence and competence of the sisters helps to prepare them to assume leadership roles in ministry and within the community.

## **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

In addition to preparing sisters to function effectively so as to be able and willing to assume leadership roles in ministerial and community settings, it might also be helpful to look at the expectations placed upon those called to leadership. In many instances, it seems, there is a tendency to idealize the role of leader and to demand that the chosen person embody so many good qualities that it is virtually impossible for any sister to live up to expectations. Although most communities have worked toward developing job descriptions for their leaders, many of the expectations attached to a given position remain not only unwritten but also deeply hidden from awareness. Often these expectations serve to relieve a person of responsibility for her own life. It would be helpful for each sister to examine her own attitudes about authority in general, the role of leaders in ministerial and community positions, and the expectations she attaches to those roles. Bringing to consciousness one's own fears or desires regarding those in leadership positions is a first step toward easing the burden placed on those in authority. When the leadership role is stripped of undue expectations, members of religious communities may find that they have a much larger applicant pool from which to choose leaders.

In their article "Therapy for Leaders" (*HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*, Summer 1998), Quinn Connors and Robert Lappin note the many difficulties faced by religious in leadership positions. They recommend the use of a therapist to act as an executive coach, offering emotional support, objective feedback, and consultation to leaders. Knowing that such assis-

tance is available might ease some of the concerns and fears that could lead otherwise qualified persons to reject leadership roles. Recognizing that no leader is or can be perfect, higher superiors might be encouraged to make this sort of assistance available to those whose leadership potential may be excellent in certain areas yet inadequate in others. Being able to call forth and nurture the leadership potential in a higher percentage of the members of a community has the potential to reduce the tendency to overload a few individuals with more responsibility than is reasonable. In this way, leadership burnout may be minimized.

## **EMOTIONAL ISSUES**

In addition to emphasizing the need for education and self-development, Sister Teresa Joseph also noted the need of the members of religious communities to feel accepted, welcomed, wanted, and trusted if they are to place their talents and energies at the service of the community. A number of difficulties have been identified in this area. One of our respondents wrote of the envy and jealousy directed toward her when she was selected to attend a highly specialized training course for which several other members of her community also had applied. Although she completed the program several years ago, she noted that she is still subjected to harassment by some of the sisters with whom she lives and works.

The behaviors that are manifestations of this envy and jealousy tend to fall into the category commonly referred to as passive-aggressive modes of expression. Indeed, the use of such modes of expression is a common finding; it was noted among those who responded to my original questionnaire, as well as among sisters living in India. Rather than identify their negative feelings and take responsibility for them, many women religious make use of indirect methods of dealing with feelings such as anger, envy, and jealousy. To own such feelings directly might be too damaging to their self-image, as they would stand in stark contrast to such ideals as the practice of charity and kindness in one's relationships. The respondent who had been selected for special training noted an exceptional amount of forgetfulness, easily defended or rationalized away, among the sisters with whom she lives. Another passive-aggressive technique, that of interrupting a client session despite a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the office door, led the sister to rent space elsewhere. Even that move was not sufficient to end the interruptions, however; on at least one occasion, a sister demanded that a matter she had forgotten to mention be handled immediately.

Behavior such as this undermines the support system that one rightly anticipates finding in the community setting. The ideals of caring and sharing ring hollow when anger and other negative feelings surface, not in honest self-examination or discussion with others but in disguise. A number of sisters' constitutions point to communal recreational activities as sources of relaxation that restore one's energies while fostering union in mind and heart. It is difficult to imagine that truly being so, however, when the community atmosphere is rife with negative feelings that cannot be aired and dealt with effectively. In addition, many sisters live singly or in pairs. As a result, they are seldom involved in communal recreational activities with members of their own religious communities. Even those living in more traditional community houses complain about the tendency of sisters to gravitate toward their friends outside the community rather than to join in communal activities. Simple celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries, new jobs, and the like, which have the potential to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of community ties, are often ignored or celebrated with friends who are not members of the religious community. Although one ought to be free to establish a broad-based, inclusive community, not to receive these simple acknowledgments from the members of one's religious community would appear to weaken the ties between sisters.

## **BOUNDARY PROBLEMS**

Another issue that contributed to high levels of stress was the inability of sisters to set appropriate boundaries for themselves in their ministry and in the community setting. As one might anticipate, struggling to get others to respect established boundaries was identified as another source of stress. One difficulty inherent in boundary issues is the fact that many important boundaries are internal, psychological limits that serve to define us as individuals. Many of these boundaries are fluid and dynamic, shifting in response to changes in the interpersonal environment. Boundaries between friends, for example, tend to be more permeable, whereas those that define work-related or professional relationships may be more fixed and more stringently enforced. Some boundaries are highly individualized, while others are commonly recognized among a given cultural group or acknowledged as appropriate to a specific setting. Sensitivity is required of each member of a community to recognize and observe the boundaries that are important to everyone in the group. Although there is a strong tendency in our culture to promote a veneer of intimacy, pseudointimacy actually un-

dermines the boundaries that are essential if genuine intimacy is to exist. Training that addresses boundary issues ought not to be limited to boundary violations that result in sexual abuse or illicit sexual activity; it should also cover those that contribute to or militate against satisfaction in community living.

## **READING SIGNALS**

Sisters serving in leadership positions are not the only ones subject to having various expectations or demands placed on them by others. One of the sisters noted a tendency on the part of many sisters to project their own needs onto the others with whom they were living and working. Rather than get to know the others and recognize their genuine needs, it is often easier to assume that one knows and to give what seems to be needed, whether or not it is desired. But when the gift is not well received, hurt feelings ensue. Of course, there are times when a genuine misunderstanding occurs; thus, it is necessary for the sisters to communicate with each other clearly and directly. Making one's own desires and needs known helps diminish the tendency, often well-intentioned, to project one's own desires onto others. There are times when the maxim "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is not directly applicable. It is far more helpful, although more prosaic, to formulate a maxim such as Make sure you really know what is desired before you attempt to fill the perceived need.

Developing awareness of the signals that indicate an increase of stress, whether one's own or that of others, is a key factor in learning to cope adequately. It is essential that we learn to monitor and attend to changes in our bodily functions, behavior patterns, and emotional state. It is far easier to deal effectively with low levels of stress than to put off seeking assistance until the stress seems overwhelming. As has already been noted, it is essential that those living in community learn to deal more effectively with negative emotions. Honesty in examining one's own emotional reactions is essential. Relying on defenses such as denial and repression does nothing to resolve negative feelings. By banishing such feelings from our consciousness, we open the door to their expression through passive-aggressive or other indirect means.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT CRITICAL**

Ongoing education and specific skills training are essential. As mentioned earlier, education for one's ministry and educational policies that support self-development help to build the self-confidence and sense of competence that inspire one to assume a leadership role in ministry or in community. Training



pertaining to boundary issues is also very helpful in reducing interpersonal stress within the ministerial and communal settings. In addition, there are a number of specific skills that, once mastered, can be called on to address the various symptoms through which stress manifests itself. For example, breathing techniques and progressive relaxation are very effective in controlling feelings of anxiety that are situation-specific (e.g., giving a speech) or aroused by interpersonal contacts. These techniques are also quite effective in reducing some of the physical symptoms that accompany anxiety (e.g., muscular tension, high blood pressure, headaches, backaches, problems associated with digestion and elimination, sleep disturbances, fatigue). Biofeedback might also be used to deal with muscular tension and elevated blood pressure. Meditation techniques, especially those that teach emptying the mind or focusing on a single word or image, may help address the sense of hopelessness, powerlessness, and poor self-esteem that frequently signal depression. These techniques are also useful in controlling obsessions and unwanted thoughts, as well as a sense of free-floating anxiety that pervades one's consciousness regardless of the situations or persons involved. Assertiveness-training techniques can reduce stress arising from interpersonal problems or depression.

It is also important to emphasize the role of community leaders in offering support to each sister while remaining mindful of the common good of the group. Many sisters have noted that those in authority are sometimes too quick to capitulate to the seemingly unreasonable demands of certain sisters, who are perceived to suffer from various psychological problems or personality difficulties. The other sisters experience this as a lack of support for their efforts to find appropriate solutions to problems encountered in communal living situations. Too often, community leaders are perceived as suffering from a kind of paralysis, more interested in keeping peace than in fostering growth and development.

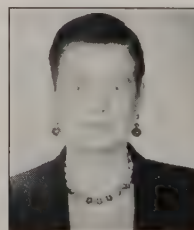
## STRONG PRAYER LIFE ESSENTIAL

Maintaining one's relationship with God through prayer was identified by the respondents as a key element in dealing with stress. Noting a change in floor plan that resulted in the chapel being sharply reduced in size prompted one sister to write: "Though Jesus may not mind having a smaller room, I find this very symbolic of how much space, actually how much consideration of the space, we give to the one Person who has brought us all together in the first place." Another sister sadly indicated her disappointment upon discovering that three of the five people in her local community chose not to attend community prayer.

One may be able to focus on the question "For whom and for what have I embraced religious life?" in a variety of settings. A strong prayer life, however, can serve as a motivator and a source of the inner strength that is required to carry on one's ministry and communal life with enthusiasm even in the midst of stress and tension. Trust in the loving presence of God, experienced in ministry and in prayer, is a powerful source of hope.

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# Themes for Jubilee 2000

*Reverend Kevin E. McKenna, J.C.D.*

**P**ope John Paul II has benignly and positively prodded the church toward serious reflection about the new millennium and the past thousand years of history, currently being celebrated in the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The themes that have been articulated—especially concerning reconciliation—offer opportunities for even the often-maligned field of church law to present reflections apropos to the event. As a practitioner in this field, I would like to offer some modest proposals that include an emphasis on aspects of our church law and the celebration of a revitalized spirit of reconciliation for Jubilee.

Maria Harris, in her book *Proclaim Jubilee: A Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century*, has taken the ancient practice of Jubilee embodied in a particular text and given it a rich, contemporary context, using the biblical Jubilees as the basis for both a pattern of spirituality and a model for religious education. The book is quite suitable, I believe, as a guide for canonical ministry as well.

Leviticus 25 presents us with the basic context for Jubilee: "You shall let the land lie fallow, that is you shall practice Sabbath; you shall forgive debts, letting forgiveness in; you shall free captives and proclaim liberty; you shall find out what belongs to whom and give it back; you shall hold a great feast, learning to sing the canticle of 'Jubilate.'"

Harris develops four themes, which are part of the

Jubilee tradition: (1) forgiveness as a way of being in the world; (2) proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants; (3) Jubilee justice; and (4) let the land lie fallow. I would like to explore each one of these themes briefly.

## **FORGIVENESS**

Forgiveness is an essential component of Jubilee. The particular form of forgiveness that Jubilee emphasizes is forgiveness from debt—specifically, the removal of the burden of a monetary debt. It can also refer to forgiveness in the more usual religious, ethical, and moral sense, as in the removal of and atonement for sins.

In the New Testament, the God and Father of Jesus is constantly described as one who forgives. Jesus preaches forgiveness, making it a centerpiece of his gospel. Essential to creating a Jubilee world is forgiving and being forgiven. Harris suggests that the practice of forgiveness can become a liberating kind of forgetting. Being in relationship with Christ calls us to constant conversion, which involves changing the way we live our life, beginning anew.

Many who exercise ministry within the context of a marriage tribunal are well aware of the deep impact this ministry can have on the hearts and minds of those who seek some determination concerning the



possible invalidity of their marriage. Many come feeling alienated from the church but struggling to keep alive their relationship with Christ. I am quite aware that those in tribunal ministry are called to an impartial justice and a canonical responsibility of making, as best as possible, an unbiased determination and judgment concerning the possible invalidity of a marriage. But if this is indeed a ministry, as most of us would like to believe and as the popes have reminded us, are we not challenged to demonstrate at the same time Christ's compassionate care? Pope Paul IV, for example, often reminded canon lawyers that the law is not for the law's sake; both law and judgment are at the service of truth, justice, patience, and charity. In his view, the virtues that would characterize the tribunal officer were love, humanity, and Christian charity, which would add greater dignity and fruitfulness to the equity of justice.

Having a failed marriage, we know, is not a sin. But the spirit of reconciliation and healing can be extremely helpful to the people who come to tribunals with a vast variety of pastoral circumstances and problems. For the Catholic petitioner, the pain is frequently magnified with the recognition of personal failure in not having lived up to the perceived expectations of the church in regards to the sanctity and permanence of marriage. Many petitioners grieve the loss of a relationship that has had great significance for them, even if it has been the source of great pain. While not forgetting the judicial role in such a process, a listening, nonjudgmental approach that allows the participants the opportunity to discuss some of the attendant strains and doubts of their journey can make this experience a channel of healing and growth, as proclaimed in the Jubilee Year.

## PROCLAIM LIBERTY

When we respond to our call to become "Jubilee people," we are asked to work for the release of today's prisoners. We are called to ask ourselves, as a church, Who is in need of freedom? Who needs to be released? Maria Harris has a wonderful prayer: "Free us, O God, from the narrowness of our vision. Help us to know what we see, not merely to see what we know."

Unfortunately, almost every diocese or religious community has experienced misconduct in its pastoral leadership. We have all struggled to formulate policies that will be acceptable to civil law and respect our canonical procedures as well. It is perhaps one of the most tragic events that a diocese can experience when one of its ministers is publicly accused of impropriety and perhaps even imprisoned. I am not suggesting that we should let the captives free, but I would offer two thoughts in this area for reflection.

The church has attempted to become as open as possible, particularly to the press—to be seen as "up front" in dealing with its various public constituencies. When our pastoral leaders engage in behavior that brings damage to a member of the church, it is a terrible violation of trust. However, when allegations have been made and suspicions have been raised about a particular cleric before any determination has been made concerning innocence or guilt, it is essential that certain human rights, especially the right to a good name and a good reputation, are respected. In a related issue, it has become increasingly more common for clerics to utilize the services of psychological resource personnel as they struggle with the complex demands of service in the contemporary church. Do we have policies about who may have access to the written records and evaluations that frequently emerge from these various consultations, and what safeguards to protect the confidentiality of these records ought to be maintained?

When clerics are convicted of misconduct, they often become pariahs within our community. Those who serve jail terms can be quickly forgotten. While not necessarily calling us to release them from bondage, the Jubilee spirit reminds us of our obligations to make sure that even for these individuals, pastoral care is provided. We need to find ways to help them when they return home, even if pastoral ministry is not possible—to reclaim interior freedom, to come to terms with their memories, and to recreate their lives. As Harris would remind us, we need to read this tradition as counseling us to turn inward and examine our own chains, our own bondage, and the cells we build in our own souls.

## JUBILEE JUSTICE

One of the important components of our vocation as ministers of the gospel is the proclamation of justice. But one of the differences in the church's legal posture is the emphasis that should be given to equity: justice tempered with the sweetness of mercy. It was Pope Paul's hope that the spirit of law embodied in the principles of canonical equity would imbue the ecclesiastical judge with moderation and mercy in his or her ministry. He said, "The judge will take account of the human person and of the demands of a given situation which may compel the judge to apply the law more severely, but ordinarily they will lead the judge to exercise it in a more human and compassionate manner."

We are also aware that one of the welcomed developments of the Second Vatican Council was its emphasis on rights, especially basic human rights. The Catholic church, by means of its particular the-

ological perspective on humanity, has provided a distinctive shape and context to the concept of human rights. The basis for the church's teaching concerning human rights is the dignity of the human person, grounded in the biblical account of the first human's creation in the image of God, as well as the two central doctrines of Christian revelation: the Incarnation and the Redemption. The consultants from the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law gave great emphasis to the role of rights in the revised code. They proposed, and the principle was accepted and confirmed at the Synod of 1967, that the essential object of canon law is the determination and safeguarding of the rights and obligations of each person. According to the "Principles for Revision," the sensitivity for rights must extend to all the church. James Coriden, a canon and civil lawyer, has argued forcefully that human rights, which now appear in the code, should be considered constitutional, since they are of primary essence and significance. Some effort has been made toward concretizing the works of justice in the code itself. The lives of clerics and religious men and women, as well as those of all the Christian faithful, should reflect the call to social consciousness and awareness: for example, making sure that ministers and employees are given just remuneration for their services and fulfilling the obligation, imposed especially on clerics and religious, not to tolerate sexism or racism within the Christian community. In addition, pastors are required to be attentive to social justice, since justice is so clearly a part of the gospel they are called to preach. The role of canon law in the arena of human rights is a significant one, even while it leaves to theology the task of discerning the particular social teachings that are appropriate and necessary at a particular time.

The church will be judged concerning human rights by its own practice. Its prophetic defense of human rights and the dignity of the human person can only be credible if the church itself is perceived by others to be just. Its service to Jubilee justice and human rights thus pledges the church to a constant examination of conscience and to a continuous purification and renewal of its own life, laws, institutions, and conduct.

Rather than utilize trial procedures to resolve conflicts concerning rights, civil law and recent canon-law developments have looked to due process. While the internal judicial procedures for remedies can sometimes be seen as cumbersome and time-consuming, canon law itself encourages parties to turn first to alternative forms of dispute settlement when they are available to resolve differences, before considering more formal court procedures. The judge is

"not to neglect to encourage the parties to collaborate in working out an equitable solution . . . perhaps even employing the services of reputable persons for mediation." All the Christian faithful "are to avoid lawsuits . . . as much as possible and resolve them peacefully as soon as possible."

The Year of Jubilee calls us to look for new and creative ways to be a church of justice, perhaps revitalizing diocesan mediation boards gone dormant, or even beginning to fashion alternative dispute-resolution processes where lacking. In this way we can transform the secular models used so successfully by many jurisdictions, imbuing them with Christian notions of forgiveness, peacemaking, and fraternal charity.

## LET LAND LIE FALLOW

The Jubilee text from Leviticus 25 draws extraordinary and sustained attention to the Sabbath. If there is to be a year of the Lord's favor, the people must keep a year-long period of rest, during which they let the land lie fallow. They must hallow the land so it will know the blessing of re-creation. And the people must also rest themselves, in order to listen to and answer the voice of their God.

Ministers of the gospel today, more than ever, need in their activity an underlying thrust of receptivity, quiet, and contemplative being. The sabbath aspect of the Jubilee helps us to become restorers of the earth by being restorers, first of all, of ourselves. Finding time to pause and rest within the demands of ministry cannot help but enhance our gospel mission with renewed focus and clarity. Such recreation is the work of Jubilee, with its tradition of reconciliation, freedom, and prophetic justice—a renewal that will eventually lead to gratitude and praise to the God of mercy in the new millennium.

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# The Depressive Minister

*Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D.*

**A**n energetic middle-aged pastor who had recently been discharged from the hospital for treatment of a mild heart attack was finding readjustment to parish life difficult. Two weeks before his heart attack, he had presided at the funeral of his younger brother. The two had been quite close, and the pastor chided himself for failing to recognize the signs of suicide in his brother.

After his hospitalization, the pastor began having difficulty falling and staying asleep. His appetite, energy level, and ability to concentrate were considerably decreased. Also, he could not seem to shake the feelings of sadness and doom that he had begun experiencing prior to his heart attack. At a follow-up visit, his cardiologist was concerned about the pastor's mood and symptoms and prescribed an antidepressant medication.

In another case, a 42-year-old former teacher had been appointed interim director of Christian formation at a medium-size suburban parish seven months previously, following the untimely death of the prior director in late summer. Since there was essentially no time to mount a regional search to replace the deceased director, the pastor offered the position to a loyal parishioner and mother of three who had been a volunteer catechist in the program for several years. The understanding was that this

would be an interim appointment for one year and could later become permanent.

Mrs. Simons was a bright, articulate, and politically correct individual who was actually quite insecure. She attempted to cover her insecurity with quick-wittedness and wry humor. The pastor was quite taken by the hospitality she displayed when he visited her family, as well as by her sometimes off-beat humor. She never imagined herself as the director of an important parish program, but because the pastor told her he had "total confidence" in her, she reluctantly accepted the position.

While support for Mrs. Simons quickly built among some of the catechists, students, and parents, it was slow in coming from many others. Several were offended by the morbid and critical comments and jokes she made in person and in the formation office's newsletter. Also, it seemed that she cultivated a group of favorites upon whom she would bestow special benefits. Often she appeared to be clueless as to the direction the program should take.

For a while Mrs. Simons asked for teacher and parent input on decisions, but when dissension mounted between her favorites and the rest of the parish community, that mode of decision making was quickly abandoned. As time passed, the pastor

became increasingly aware of the pessimistic attitude behind Mrs. Simons's humor and actions. He became convinced that an outside search for a permanent director was necessary.

Both of the profiled individuals exhibit depressive features. In the first case, the minister meets the DSM-IV (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition) criteria for depressive personality disorder; in the second case, the woman meets the criteria for major depressive disorder. While there are some similarities between the two, there are also notable differences. This article emphasizes the dynamics of the depressive personality disorder as they are manifested in ministry personnel. However, to clarify the distinction between that personality disorder and major depressive disorder, a section highlights the differences. In this article, "depressive" is used to describe people with depressive personality disorder.

## DYNAMICS OF THE DISORDER

DSM-IV includes an investigational diagnosis called depressive personality disorder, which has considerable validity and clinical utility in understanding and treating a growing number of ministers today. Basic to this disorder of personality is a persistent and pervasive feeling of dejection, gloominess, joylessness, and unhappiness. Individuals with this disorder lack a sense of humor, are overly serious, and seem to be incapable of relaxation and enjoyment. They view both the present and the future negatively. They judge others as harshly as they view themselves and tend to focus on others' failings rather than their positive attributes. They may exhibit a wry sense of humor, or they may be openly cynical. In short, pervasive pessimism is a guiding factor in their lives.

Individuals with this personality style also tend to be quiet, passive, and introverted. They tend to be followers rather than leaders and often allow others to make a wide range of decisions for them. To the extent to which they have histories of early abuse, they tend to be ambivalent about authority figures. They may appear friendly and gregarious, since they fear isolation and being alone. Their episodes of depression and anxiety are usually precipitated by a real loss or abandonment, such as divorce or the death of a spouse.

Depressive personality disorder has some similarities with dysthymic disorder, which is characterized as a chronic form of depression that lasts two years or longer and has less severe depressive symptoms than major depressive disorders. While depressive personality disorder is a chronic, lifelong

condition, it emphasizes cognitive (self-critical, negativistic, and pessimistic), intrapersonal (unhappy, brooding, feeling inadequate and worthless), and interpersonal (being judgmental, critical, and blaming toward others) dimensions, which dysthymic disorder does not.

Psychologically, individuals with dysthymic disorder grew up viewing themselves as victimized by life and doubting their capacities: "I'm hurt and inadequate." Their view of the world tends to be, "Things never work out for me, and I must rely on others to take care of me because I'm unable." Accordingly, their basic life strategy tends to be, "Don't get your hopes up, and rely on others at all costs." Because of these attitudes, these individuals seldom develop effective skills in assertive communication, negotiation, and problem solving. As children, they were raised in families where parental criticism as well as overprotection were common. A likely parental injunction was, "You'll probably mess up by yourself, so you'll need our help." They were likely to have been both protected and criticized by adults as well as by siblings and peers. Not surprisingly, they expect similar care and protection as adults.

## TWO TYPES OF DEPRESSIVE MINISTERS

In *Healers: Harmed and Harmful*, his clinical study of ministry personnel, Conrad Weiser finds that the depressive personality, which he calls "depressed/dependent," is common in ordained and lay ministry. He notes that individuals with depressive personalities, especially those with secondary narcissistic and compulsive features, are increasingly attracted to ministry positions today and are prime candidates for acceptance. He attributes this to recent changes in the cultures and expectations of dioceses and religious congregations. This is reflected in screening guidelines that encourage and support dependence and compliance among candidates and screen out more-independent and potentially rebellious candidates. Weiser contends that such screening guidelines inadvertently contribute to the increasing number of women being attracted to a variety of ministries, given that they are more likely to adopt and accept nurturing roles and characteristics than are men.

These individuals tend to be dutiful, obedient, and loyal to superiors and institutions. That they subscribe to traditional beliefs and values and orthodox practices is a given. They are more likely to be in renewal that occurs over a protracted period of time than in radical reform. Furthermore, they often have a history of volunteer activity and tend to be cooperative rather than competitive.



According to Weiser, depressive individuals do not see themselves on the cutting edge; rather they view themselves as part of a larger and safer system that provides a sense of family and a feeling of belonging. Interestingly, they are likely to be viewed as healthy ministers simply because they are not threatening to others. Often, they lack the healthy kind of drive expected of professionals, and so they are unlikely to be creative or visionary or to propose new ideas or programs. Because they principally seek safety and caring from individuals and institutions, it should not be surprising that they are uncomfortable in prophetic and leadership roles.

Weiser describes two types of depressive ministers: higher-functioning and lower-functioning. The higher-functioning type is described in the previous three paragraphs. Lower-functioning depressive ministers are likely to meet the criteria for depressive personality disorder. They are more distressed and impaired than their higher-functioning counterparts. Usually from severely dysfunctional families, they tend to have histories of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Their family life was often punitive, abusive, and depressive. There was little bonding between parent and children. Not surprisingly, these ministers come to religious congregations and institutions searching for the nurturing, safety, and love they did not receive as children. Much of the time, these ministers are frustrated in this search because their needs are so exaggerated.

## **SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR**

In terms of religious behavior, depressive individuals appear to be orthodox in their beliefs and loyal followers, despite their ambivalence. This theme is reflected in their image of God, prayer life, and core issues in spiritual direction.

**Image of God.** Depressive ministers tend to view God as all-powerful as well as merciless at times, and themselves as insignificant and unlikely to experience God's mercy. Thus, God is imaged as a blend of Rescuer and Punisher. When their prayers are not "answered" or when these individuals are not otherwise "rescued," they are likely to fear that God has abandoned them.

**Prayer.** Just as they depend on others to take care of them, they depend on God to take care of their needs. Not surprisingly, petitionary prayer predominates with these individuals ("God help me / protect me / take care of me / comfort me"). When their prayers are not answered as they would like, they

easily lose faith and fear being abandoned by God. At such times they turn to others for consolation and comfort.

**Reliance on Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Counseling.** Because of their sense of inadequacy and limited experience in taking responsibility for themselves, they tend to seek out religious counselors repeatedly. They may shift their dependency to spiritual directors or counselors and make numerous telephone calls to them for reassurance between interviews. If the counselor is away on a vacation, they may feel devastated by their sense of abandonment. Not surprisingly, they may have two or more counselors at once without telling them about each other. For these individuals, interviews and telephone calls are ways of reducing anxiety resulting from their fear of separation.

## **DISTINGUISHING DEPRESSIONS**

Depressive personality disorder differs from so-called normal depressive traits such as unhappiness, self-criticism, and feelings of guilt. Rather than feeling "blue" for a matter of hours or a day or so, individuals with depressive personality disorder routinely experience these thoughts and feelings, as well as a significant degree of impairment in social or occupational functioning.

The depressive personality disorder also contrasts with major depressive disorder—also called clinical depression—in a number of ways. The symptoms of major depression must be significantly distressing for at least two weeks—nearly every day, for most of the day—and usually affect intimacy as well as social and occupational functioning. Clinical depression not only alters moods but also affects bodily functioning, activity level, and thinking. Changes in appetite, sleep, and activity are commonly noted. Clinically depressed individuals may have sleeping difficulties (i.e., sleeping too little or too much), decreased desire to eat, or excessive eating. They may have very little energy or feel apathetic or tired much of the time. Tearfulness is common. Interest in sex and pleasurable activities tends to be diminished. These individuals may also experience impaired concentration and feelings of guilt, hopelessness, and helplessness. Their thinking may be slowed and confused. Suicidal thoughts during this period are not uncommon.

Sometimes ministers with depressive personality disorder can develop a concurrent major depressive disorder. Usually, this occurs after a significant loss and in the context of other life stressors. This combination of two types of depressive conditions



is called double depression. Treatment is generally more complicated than for major depressive disorder alone and usually requires medication and/or hospitalization.

## INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS

The focal issue in the therapeutic treatment of this personality disorder is the persistent and pervasive pattern of pessimism and overdependency. Because of the centrality of the cognitive dimension of this disorder—pessimism, self-criticalness, and negativism—cognitively oriented psychotherapeutic approaches have considerable promise. Their focus would be cognitive restructuring aimed at self-view and world view. Medications—specifically, the newer serotonergic blockers (Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil) and serotonin-norepinephrine blockers (Serzone, Remeron)—may be considered as adjunctives to psychotherapy.

Spiritual direction or spiritual counseling can give valuable support to cognitive-focused psychotherapy. The spiritual director might focus on the minister's distorted image of God and prayer style. Reasonable goals might be to expand the minister's image of God and to supplement petitionary prayer with prayer of thanksgiving and gratitude. To the extent to which they have experienced abuse of various types during their upbringing, these ministers are unlikely to believe that they could ever be the "beloved" son or daughter "called by name." Spiritual direction could provide the context for a spiritually and emotionally corrective experience.

## ORGANIZATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

**Screening.** The matter of screening candidates for ministerial positions is not one to be taken lightly. While it is true that higher-functioning individuals with depressive personality dynamics may appear to be ideal candidates because of their loyalty, obedience, and cooperativeness, they cannot be expected to provide visionary and prophetic leadership in times of rapid social change.

Certainly, lower-functioning individuals—those who meet DSM-IV criteria for depressive personality disorder—are high-risk candidates. Whether in a training program or in actual ministry situations, they are quite difficult to work with. Since they want to please authority figures, they are seldom proactive and take few, if any, risks. Their style is highly reactive, so they scan the environment, looking for clues as to what those in authority desire. But even knowing that does not mean they can or

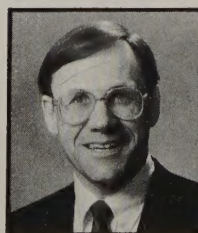
will deliver. After all, they are ambivalent about authority figures. Not surprisingly, many experienced psychologists and psychiatrists who consult with religious organizations, including Conrad Weiser, insist that these candidates have no place in public ministries.

**Assignments.** Religious administrators would do well to consider personality style when arranging ministry assignments. With regard to the depressive personality style, it should be noted that a pastoral or ministry team populated by more than one of these individuals will have difficulty being decisive and effective. A certain contagion effect—a depressive undercurrent that can pervade a group's functioning—has been noted when no limits are set on the pessimism, black humor, and blame that emanate from this personality style.

**Culture of a Religious Organization.** Sometimes the culture of a diocesan staff or of a religious curia may reflect this depressive style. Since the culture of an organization is greatly influenced by its current leadership, it is unfortunate when one or more members of the provincial leadership team or diocesan officials exhibit this personality style or disorder. Organizations with this problem are unlikely to effectively provide quality ministry or to recruit healthy candidates. Usually, outside professional consultation is necessary to effect a change in the organizational culture.

## RECOMMENDED READING

- Bornstein, R. *The Dependent Personality*. New York, New York: Guilford, 1993.
- Margolis, S., and P. Rabins. *Depression and Anxiety*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins, 2000.
- Sperry, L. *Handbook of Diagnosis and Treatment of the DSM-IV Personality Disorders*. New York, New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1995.
- Weiser, C. *Healers: Harmed and Harmful*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress, 1994.



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# BOOK REVIEWS

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*Enjoying God's Beauty* by John J. Navone, S.J. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999. 134 pages. \$12.95.

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**T**he Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins passionately writes about beauty as a primary lens for one's experience of the divine. "Nothing is as beautiful as spring," "The world is charged with the grandeur of God," "Glory be to God for dappled things"—these typical Hopkins lines reveal the presence of God in our experience of nature and daily life.

A similar admiration of beauty is found in *Enjoying God's Beauty* by John Navone, S.J. For Father Navone, beauty is an irresistible pursuit; it inevitably leads to God, and its appreciation resides in the enjoyment thereof. Hence, beauty, reflecting the divine, is to be sought, relished, and celebrated in all its dimensions. In fact, the seeking of beauty is our vocation: "Ultimate Reality (God) beckons us in what we find most beautiful. Our personal vocation is rooted in our experience of Beauty."

Navone, a prolific international writer and creative thinker, is no neophyte to the topic of beauty. As a professor of theology at the Gregorian University Institute of Spirituality in Rome, he lectures on the biblical spirituality of joy and beauty and has published *Towards a Theology of Beauty* and *The Land and the Spirit of Italy: The Texture of Italian Religious Culture*. With great clarity of pen, he has compiled an impressive theological synthesis of God's beauty and glory from a spectrum of sources: biblical, liturgical, philosophical, literary, artistic, and cultural. With ease and imagination, Navone draws on a host of sources—including Thomas Aquinas, Josef Peiper, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Saint

Bonaventure, Bernard Lonergan, C. S. Lewis, and Hans Urs Von Balthasar—in order to explore the ramifications of beauty in our increasingly technological world.

*Enjoying God's Beauty* consists of three main sections. The first, "Christian Experience of Beauty," contains chapters entitled "Windows on Beauty," "In a Glass Darkly," "Beauty Begets Beauty," "Time to Enjoy," and "To Enjoy Is to Glorify." The second section, "Beauty in Scripture," comprises chapters on "The Look of Love," "The 'Beautiful' Shepherd," "Scriptural Icons," "Sight to the Blind," and "Predestined for Glory." The final section, "Beauty in the Church," consists of three chapters, "Jonathan Edwards and Aquinas," "Beauty in Liturgy," and "Radiant Spirit." Each of these chapters is well-documented with footnotes that reveal to the reader critical primary sources.

While each chapter provides an aesthetic meditation on beauty, two chapters are particularly significant to this reviewer: "Windows on Beauty" and "The 'Beautiful' Shepherd." In "Windows on Beauty," Navone establishes a compelling constellation of twenty-three characteristics of beauty grounded in Catholic theological perspectives. He articulates the presuppositions of his spirituality of beauty so that the vocation to pursue it is appreciated as an essential anthropological/divine relationship. This Catholic understanding of joy in God's beauty is found in basic Catholic doctrine concerning creation, revelation, Christology, Trinity, and incarnation. Navone elucidates:

Beauty is at the heart of all human motivation. True beauty as the attractiveness of the truly good motivates human life and development in that intellectual, moral, and religious self-transcendence that constitutes human authenticity or excellence. Without our experiencing the attractiveness or beauty of intellectual, moral, and religious goods, such goods are bereft of their power to transform. The bias which regards beauty as ornamental, cosmetic, and useless overlooks the indispensable motivational power of beauty for the attainment of human excellence and happiness.



In another chapter, the Good Shepherd icon in John's Gospel contributes to our understanding the transforming impact of God's beauty on human life. *Kalos* is the Greek word for both "beautiful" and "good." Each describes the beauty of Jesus' laying down his life for his sheep and the goodness of that life in them (John 10:11). This is the implicit truth of Dostoyevsky's affirmation that "Beauty saves the world." Drawn by the transforming beauty of the shepherd, we leave all ugliness behind. In this sense, the beauty of the shepherd is healing, bringing us to completion in the recognition of our own splendor and that of all creation, the human community, and our Creator.

Formators, spiritual directors, pastoral counselors, and other pastoral persons might ask how beauty applies to ministry. Do not the consideration of the true and its knowability, the good and its lovability, and the beautiful and its delight belong more in the realm of philosophy? And how does beauty compete with contemporary emphases on liberation, service, praxis, and issues of equality and gender, justice and peace? The holiness of beauty, a cornerstone of the Christian tradition, is in need of modern-day emancipation, especially from any pinched puritanism that insinuates beauty as ornamental, cosmetic, or useless. As mentor and pastoral guide, John Navone provides grounded theological guideposts and frameworks to help the beholder peer deeper into God's creation, even for the first time.

I highly recommend *Enjoying God's Beauty* as a significant collection of treatises that artistically and insightfully uncover in fresh ways the treasury of the importance of beauty—notably God's beauty, as contained in the tradition. *Enjoying God's Beauty* serves as an illuminating resource, not only for pastoral ministers and educators but also for anyone seriously interested in probing Christian spirituality.

—John P. Mossi, S.J., D.Min.

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*The Changing Face of the Priesthood* by Donald B. Cozzens. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000. 148 pages. \$14.95.

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**D**onald Cozzens totes credentials in psychology, as well as considerable experience in ministry to priests and within seminary formation, to a challenging discussion on priesthood. An honest man in person and with pen, he invites an unflinching gaze

and radical critique of what bothers and blesses the presbyterates of our nation. Just a week after the book's appearance, the *National Catholic Reporter* published an issue (March 31, 2000) on priesthood, fortified by a glowing review of Cozzens's themes, which was followed by the well-rehearsed perspectives of Richard Sipe and Eugene Kennedy. Cozzens experienced some heated criticism from his seminarians and bishop after giving an interview to his local paper in Cleveland, Ohio. He has ruled out further interviews, but the flurry of praise and criticism will not soon abate.

In this concise book, Cozzens analyzes priestly issues, challenges, concerns, and realities with steady passion, although at times unevenly. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the priesthood from the perspectives of Freudian and Jungian psychology and were finished during his 1980–89 tenure at Ursuline College. The material has seen the ink of too many publications and doesn't serve his overall critique as well as might a more anthropological analysis in the key of René Girard.

Whenever the author paints a scene of how things are in seminaries and in the everyday world of priestly practice, his shadings are pluperfect. This priest has seen and reflected, and now he invites a public discourse on this experience. The perspectives of an insider have all the virtues of accuracy and all the problems of testing the capacity of outside readers to appreciate his interpretations of the facts. Nowhere is this tension as explicit as in chapter 7, when he undertakes the delicate phenomenology of sexual orientation. The issue of the gay seminarian or priest is both underdiscussed and overdetermined. The chapter will encourage the discussion by framing questions that touch both the straight and the gay. The significant challenge within these discussions is whether the participants can resist the cultural mania to substitute a relatively minor human thematic for the substantive problematic of how we have sold out our mystical tradition for the rumblings of political and moral correctness.

Having spent ten years in the purgatorial fires of the sexual abuse scandals, protecting the territorial rights of treatment centers and fending off numerous reportorial queries of whether celibacy caused the mess, I could taste the sadness of chapter 8, which is one of the more heartfelt summaries available. Cozzens has the genuine soul of one who listens to both victim and abuser and, for the most part, gets it very, very right. I can only add to his recitation of regrets the remembrance of how fifteen years of research, covering 85 percent of clergy and religious treated for ephibophilia and pedophilia, was put out of public reach by a single vote of the Administrative



Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Fear of further negative publicity prevented a contribution to a regrettably understudied affliction.

Some words from Cozzens's conclusion smartly summarize the "feel" of the book:

Another reason for hope lies in the apparent purification and maturation the priesthood has undergone in the last two decades of the twentieth century. From their own pastoral experience, priests know something happens to the soul when it is subjected to ordeal upon ordeal, to unrelenting criticism, and to the anxiety that follows the loss of one's place and identity. Either it surrenders to despair or chooses to hope against hope that life will go on, that mercy upon mercy will lift it up. Most priests have not given in to despair or lost their nerve.

From my experience in guiding many priests' retreats, I believe he's got that right.

At the conclusion of a recent clergy conference, a priest participant with complete disregard for my topic asked if I had read this book. He was almost gushing with praise and enthusiasm for how it might stimulate important discussions among clergy and concerned laity. I support his enthusiasm and admire Donald Cozzens for his risk taking. We have a useful stimulus at hand, together with other first-rate works on the theology of priesthood. The million-dollar question is whether episcopal leadership will support and effect open dialogue. Let's pray for a positive answer—and, with that hope in mind, by all means read the book.

—Canice Connors, O.F.M.Conv., Ph.D.

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*Psychotherapy with Priests, Protestant Clergy, and Catholic Religious: A Practical Guide* by Joseph W. Ciarrocchi, Ph.D., and Robert J. Wicks, Psy.D. Madison, Connecticut: Psycho-social Press, 2000. 211 pages. \$40.00.

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**H**eadlines in the last fifteen years about clergy sexual misconduct have leveled the playing field for clergy and religious, who are now seen as human beings facing many of the same psychological issues as other people. Nevertheless, there are certain unique features to their personalities and issues that Joseph Ciarrocchi and Robert Wicks ably and thor-

oughly address in this new book about doing psychotherapy with them. The population they focus on includes Roman Catholic priests, Protestant clergy, and Roman Catholic women and men religious.

This book consists of four parts, beginning with a helpful description of the religious and cultural contexts for clergy today. The authors describe what is unique for this population in terms of the psychological impact of stress and distorted theological understandings of ministry, including the use and misuse of anger in relationships at home and in church. Ciarrocchi and Wicks follow this pattern in the other parts of the book, describing the uniqueness of this population's faith-based and organizational context for treatment regarding so-called negative emotions (anxiety, depression, and guilt), as well as compulsive behaviors, sexual issues, and celibacy. This approach is particularly beneficial for those psychotherapists and counselors who do not come out of a religious framework. It speaks to the need and ethical responsibility of any professional to develop a respect for the cultural context of his or her clients. However, their thorough descriptions of church and religious community environments are also beneficial to those who are familiar with the religious world, reminding them how complex such environments can be.

The authors are generous in suggesting clinical interventions, practical assignments for between sessions, and multiple approaches to problem solving. They provide cogent and research-based discussions of such specific problems as gambling and overspending, scrupulosity, shame, guilt, and interpersonal disorders. Their chapter on celibacy includes explorations of countertransference issues for therapists, asexuality and healthy sexuality, sexual orientation, and situational homosexuality. In particular, their discussion of "passive celibacy," the stance of those who publicly commit themselves to celibacy but still seem open to a genital relationship, is an honest assessment of a circumstance that often brings priests and religious into therapy.

The authors provide a handbook that could be a useful reference tool for any mental health professional. It is practical, and they use clinically based examples throughout the book. However, it could also serve as a handy reference guide for formation personnel, as well as for seminary and church leaders, as they try to prepare future ministers for the challenges and difficulties of full-time ministry. Ciarrocchi and Wicks have given therapists and counselors a valuable guide to help them more effectively serve a unique population that deserves the best treatment possible.

—Quinn R. Connors, O.Carm., Ph.D.